This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

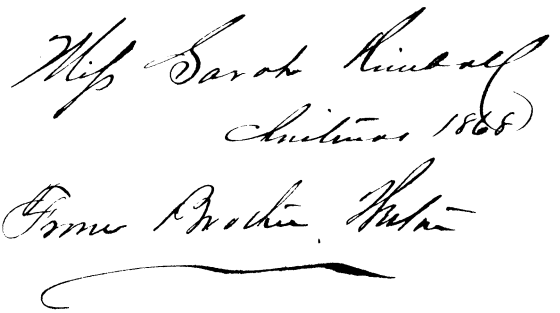
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

CHARLIE SURPRISED. — Page 158.

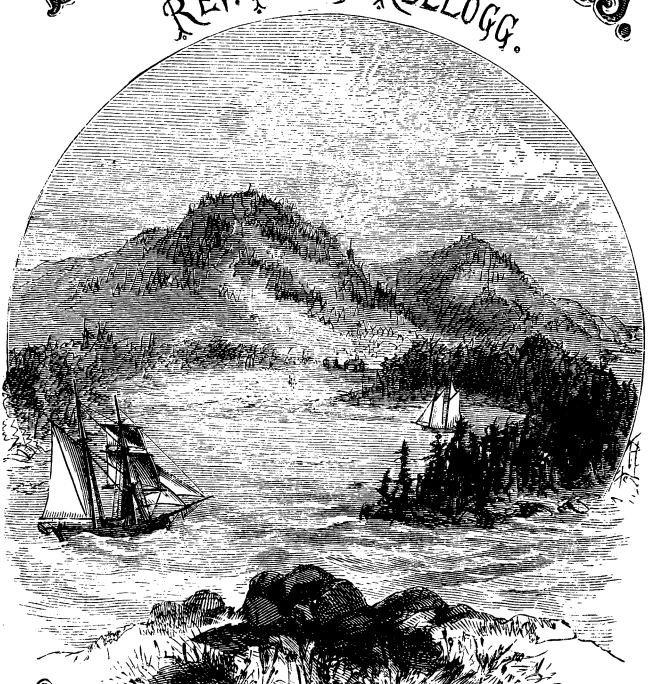
Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

ELM ISLAND STORIES.

BY

REV. ELIJAH KELLOGG.



CHARLIE BELL.

JOHN ANDREW — SON

LEE & SHEPARD BOSTON.

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

ELM ISLAND STORIES.

CHARLIE BELL,

THE WAIF OF ELM ISLAND.

BY

REV. ELIJAH KELLOGG,

AUTHOR OF "SPARTACUS TO THE GLADIATORS," "GOOD OLD TIMES," ETC.

BOSTON:
LEE AND SHEPARD.
1869.

Hosted by Google

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868, by

LEE AND SHEPARD,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

ELECTROTYPED AT THE

BOSTON STEREOTYPE FOUNDRY,

19 Spring Lane.

Hosted by Google

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a period in the life of all boys, when, in the homely phrase of Uncle Isaac, "they stand up edgeways." At this critical period, as streams are tinged by the soils through which they filter, so their character for life is in a great measure shaped by their playmates, the examples set before them, and the associations amid which they grow up.

Lion Ben, the principal character in the first volume of the series, with nothing but his hands, narrow axe, and a true-hearted, loving woman, — his equal in enterprise, — goes on to an island, an unbroken forest in the midst of breakers, that, by reason of the peril of living on it, can be bought cheap, thus coming within their scanty means, there to struggle for a homestead and acres of their own.

Hosted by Google

Though bred a seaman, yet cherishing a love for the soil, with qualities of mind and heart commensurate with his great physical power, he appreciates the beauty of the spot.

His reluctance to devote it to axe and firebrand excites him to efforts equally daring and original, in order that he may so husband his resources as to pay for the land without stripping it of its majestic coronal of timber and forests, any farther than is necessary to render it available for cultivation.

In this he is aided by the counsels of an old friend of himself and his family, — a most original and sagacious man, — Isaac Murch. In their sayings and doings is represented the subsoil of American character — the home life and modes of thought of those who made the culture and progress; thus endeavoring, in a pleasing manner, to teach those great truths which lie at the foundation of thrift, progress, and morality.

Charlie Bell, the hero of the second volume of the series, is an English orphan, flung at a tender age upon the stormy sea of life, to sink or swim, as it should please Heaven. Friendless, starving on

Hosted by Google

a wharf at Halifax, he ships in a vessel with men, who, under the guise of fishermen, are little better than pirates. Landing at Elm Island, they insult the wife of Lion Ben, who inflicts upon them a merited chastisement, and adopts the orphan.

In his boy life, and that of his young associates, their daily employments, and those exciting adventures which a new country, rude state of society, and a ragged reach of sea-coast afford to boys full of blue veins and vitriol, are seen the germs of qualities that ripen into characters of the greatest usefulness.

As the volumes are closely connected, it is hoped this sketch may render the second volume readable to those who take it up without having read the first.

Hosted by Google

ELM ISLAND STORIES.

---

1. LION BEN OF ELM ISLAND.
2. CHARLIE BELL, THE WAIF OF ELM ISLAND.
3. THE ARK OF ELM ISLAND.

Others in preparation.

Hosted by Google

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Rousing the Lion.	9
II.	Charlie Bell.	17
III.	John goes to see the new Boy.	33
IV.	Grit and Gratitude.	45
V.	Charles returns John's Visit.	58
VI.	Charlie in a Snow Squall.	70
VII.	Charlie plans a Surprise for Sally. . .	85
VIII.	Charlie's Home Life and Employments. .	97
IX.	Ben finds a Prize.	111
X.	How they passed the Winter Evenings. .	123
XI.	Ben reveals his long-cherished Plan to his Father.	139
XII.	The Mysterious Pig.	151
XIII.	A Novel Craft.	171
XIV.	The Burn.	183
XV.	Fitting away.	203

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER PAGE

XVI. A Well-deserved Holiday. 215

XVII. Uncle Isaac's Pledge. 250

XVIII. Generosity and Pluck. 264

XIX. Fred's Sand-bird Pie. 285

XX. A Hair-breadth Escape. 296

XXI. The Boys and the Widow. 315

Hosted by Google

CHARLIE BELL OF ELM ISLAND.

CHAPTER I.

ROUSING THE LION.

When the English army, during the war of the Revolution, were driven out of Boston by the batteries of Washington, erected upon Dorchester Heights, those traitors to the liberties of their country (called in those days Tories), who had taken part with the British, accompanied them to Halifax, being more than a thousand in number, as they were fearful of the vengeance of their countrymen if they remained behind. During the war that followed, they, with their British friends, were accustomed to come along the coast and islands of Maine in vessels and armed boats, and maltreat and plunder the unarmed inhabitants. These vessels were called "shaving mills," and they were wont to shave very close.

In Eaton's History of Thomaston and Rockland,

Hosted by Google

it is said that a Tory by the name of Pomeroy, who was captain of one of these mills, took Robert Jameson from his mowing field, carried him on board his vessel, and put him in irons, while his men killed a yoke of oxen and three fat hogs, and put them on board the vessel, together with three firkins of butter and two guns. Jameson vowed revenge.

As is usual in such cases, Pomeroy's ill-gotten gains did not thrive with him. After the war he became poor, and finally shipped before the mast in a coaster, commanded by Paul Jameson, Robert's brother, who told him that if they met his brother he would protect him, as he was the stouter of the two. But Robert got on board the vessel in Paul's absence, and gave Pomeroy his choice to fight or take a whipping. But he refused, endeavoring to excuse his conduct by the usages of war, saying that, now the war was over, all ought to be forgotten and forgiven.

Jameson replied, "Strip and defend yourself! fight! only fight! I shall be satisfied."

But the other refusing, he began beating, kicking, and bruising the passive Pomeroy, still trying to induce him to defend himself, but in vain. At last he took a bayonet, and pricking him a little, to

Hosted by Google

see if life remained, left him with the assurance that this was only the payment for his butter; and that wherever and whenever he found him, he should, in the same manner, take pay, — first for his hogs, and then for his oxen.

After peace was concluded, both the ports of Maine and Nova Scotia were full of old privateersmen, returned soldiers of low character, and vagabonds of all sorts, who, having become accustomed to plunder, and unwilling to labor, would get hold of some vessel or large boat, go along shore, fish a little to keep up appearances, and when they came to an island or lonely point, where the men were timid, would take fish off the flakes, a lamb out of the flock, dig potatoes, or gather corn; sometimes enforcing submissiveness with knives or pistols. When the men were away fishing, they would compel the women to get them food and liquor (which every family in those days kept in the house), and abuse and frighten them most outrageously.

A crew of such fellows, running the shore along to see what they could find, and being rather short both of liquor and provisions, made Elm Island at daylight, and seeing there was but a single house on it, and a good harbor, while the occupant was too far from neighbors to obtain help in case of

Hosted by Google

need, thought it a most excellent opportunity to obtain all they wanted.

Sally knew something, and had heard more, of her husband's vast strength; she knew that when he took her up, to carry her from the boat to the shore, she was a feather in his hands; she knew, also, that John Strout and Uncle Isaac, who were both strong men, — especially Uncle Isaac, who was celebrated for his strength, — had as much as they could do to haul up the great log canoe, but Ben would haul it up, with her in it, apparently without an effort. Sally had also heard the young folks say that he had an awful temper when he did get started, and that when he rose he was the devil all over; but she didn't believe it, for she had known him ever since they were children, and had never seen anything of it.

Ben had gone into the woods to hew a stick of timber. Sally had just washed up her breakfast dishes, and was singing at her wheel, when suddenly six savage-looking fellows appeared at the door, and ordered her, with curses, to get them some victuals, and be quick about it, too. Sally's heart was in her throat. She told the leader, who, like his companions, was armed with pistols, and a sailor's knife in his belt, that she was willing to

Hosted by Google

give them breakfast, but they must give her better language, or she should call her husband; upon which, drawing a sheath-knife from his belt, he flourished it in her face, and told her she might call him as soon as she pleased, and he would cut his throat for him.

Her first impulse was to run for Ben; but she was afraid they might kill her before she could accomplish her purpose; or, as they were so many, and fully armed, kill him. She instantly put the best she had in the house before them. They soon called for liquor, when she took a gallon jug of rum, which they kept in the house for special occasions, and placed it on the table.

Beginning to feel at home, they took their pistols from their belts and laid them on the table, as they were drinking and singing vulgar songs. Sally contrived, while waiting upon them, to shake the priming from their pistols. They were now become so abusive, that, watching her opportunity, she ran for the woods, and urged Ben to take the canoe and flee, and leave the house to them. At her news, Ben's face assumed an expression like that of a wild beast; all the grosser elements of his tremendous animal power came uppermost. Hissing out the words between his teeth, he asked

Hosted by Google

her to describe the leader, and where he sat. So absolute was his self-confidence, that he never even took the broad-axe with him, but, striking it into the timber with a force that split through the eight inch stick, left it quivering. Sally, afraid to stay behind, followed, running to keep up with the long strides of her husband, who, kicking off his shoes, crept in at the eastern door, like a lion upon his prey. His face was livid with passion; his lips covered with foam and drawn apart, showing his great white teeth and square jaws; his bare arms and breast covered with hair; and his immense frame, increased by the swelling of the muscles, gave him a terrible appearance.

As he entered the door, he came face to face with the leader of the gang, who, sobered by fright, grasped a pistol; but, before he could cock it, Ben caught him by the nape of his neck, lifted him over the table, and catching the slack of his breeches with the other hand, raised him to the ceiling, and smashed him down upon the stone hearth with such violence that the blood gushed from his mouth and nostrils, and he lay quivering and moaning in helpless agony. Seizing the one on his right hand, he flung him against the walls of the house, from which he dropped senseless upon the bed that

Hosted by Google

stood in that part of the room. The one on his left hand succeeded in getting his head and shoulders out at the door, which Ben noticing, he clapped his foot against it and held him as in a vice, while he reached after another, who was running for the front door, and, catching him by the leg, dragged him back, and slapping him first upon one side of his head and then the other, completely disabled him. Catching up the one imprisoned in the door, who had been screaming murder with all his might, he shook him as a cat would a mouse, till his rum and his breakfast ran out of his mouth, then flung him into the fireplace among the ashes, telling him if he or one of them moved till he came back, he would finish him.

The other two, escaping at the front of the house, ran for the vessel, cut the cable, and were hoisting the foresail. Before they could accomplish their object, Ben was alongside in his canoe. The cook, whom they had left to take care of the vessel, catching sight of Ben first, instantly leaped overboard, and swam for the shore. He caught the other two as they were mounting the rail to follow, and taking them to the windlass, flung them across it, on their bellies, and bringing their necks and heels together, fastened them with a rope, then

Hosted by Google

flogged them till the blood ran. One of them, hoping to find mercy, cried out, "I am an American."

"Then you shall have double," said Ben.

He then ordered them to run the vessel on to the beach, where, as it was ebb tide, she stuck fast; and thus they were completely in his power, and needed no watching, at least for six hours, till the tide made.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER II.

CHARLIE BELL.

Ben now jumped into his canoe, and gave chase to the one who had jumped overboard, and was swimming with all his might for the shore. On coming out of the water he ran for the woods, but meeting Sally (who, afraid to stay among the groaning, bleeding sufferers, had set out for the beach), he flung himself at her feet, and, clinging to her dress, begged for mercy.

"Don't touch him, Ben," cried Sally, flinging her arms round him; "don't you see he's but a child, and hasn't been in the thing at all?"

Ben, who had been blinded by rage, now saw that he was, as she said, a pale, slender-looking boy, and stayed his hand.

The poor boy, on his knees, pale as death, the tears running down his cheeks, exclaimed, "O, don't kill me, sir! I'm only a poor, friendless little boy, and haven't done any wrong. I ain't to blame for what the others did; truly, sir, I'm not a bad boy."

Hosted by Google

"If you are an honest boy, how came you in the company of such villains?"

"Indeed, sir, I didn't know what kind of men they were till I got on board; I've been ever since trying to get away, and can't."

"Why didn't you run away?"

"They watch me too closely; and when they can't watch me, they tie or lock me up, and tell me if they catch me trying to run away they will shoot me."

"Let me talk to him, Ben," said Sally; "you frighten him; don't you see how he quivers every time you speak?"

"What is your name, my boy?"

"Charles Bell, marm."

"Where do you belong?"

"In England."

"Are your parents there?"

"No, marm; they are dead. I have no kindred in this country, nor any friends."

"Well," replied Ben, whose passion was rapidly cooling, "I shall let you off; but I advise you next time to look out how you get into bad company. Come, Sally, let's go to the house and clear these ruffians out."

When they returned to the house, they found it

Hosted by Google

presenting the appearance of a butcher's shambles, although none of the occupants were dead, as Sally had supposed.

The leader still lay insensible on the hearth; and the blood had run from him the whole length of the room. The one Ben had flung against the wall lay on the bed, the sheets and pillows of which were soaked in blood that issued from his nose and mouth. The one he threw into the fireplace still lay on his back across the andirons, with his head in the ashes, for Ben told them, if one of them moved, when he came back he'd make an end of them.

"Here, boy," said Ben, giving him the key of the cuddy, "go and let those fellows loose, and tell them to come up here and take away their comrades, and bear a hand about it, too, or I shall be after them."

The men came, pale and trembling, bringing with them a hand-barrow, such as is used by fishermen to carry fish. On this they laid the captain, and carried him on board. The others were able, with assistance, to stagger along. Sally wanted to wash the captain's face, and pour some spirit down his throat, to bring him to; but Ben would not allow her, saying, "He is not fit for a decent

Hosted by Google

woman to touch; and if he dies there'll be one villain less in the world."

"But he's not fit to die, Ben."

"That's his lookout," was the stern reply; "away with him." The boy still lingered, though he eyed Ben with evident distrust, and shrunk himself together every time he spoke. But as soon as the men were all out of the house, Ben assumed an entirely different appearance; his voice lost its stern tone, the flush faded from his face, his muscles relaxed, and he asked the trembling boy to sit down, as it would be some time before the vessel would float that he came in.

Sally now gave him some water to wash his hands, that were bloody from handling his comrades, combed his hair, and gave him a piece of bread and butter.

"Here comes John Strout," said Ben, looking out at the door.

"O, dear!" said Sally, "what a looking place for anybody to come into!"

"What's all this?" said John, looking at the blood on the floor and bed-clothes; "have you been butchering?"

"Almost," replied Sally.

"What schooner was that in the cove, Ben?"

Hosted by Google

"I don't know."

"Where does she hail from?"

"I don't know."

"Are they fishermen?"

"No; thieves."

"What did they come here for?"

"To see what they could get of me."

"How many o them have you killed?"

"Well, I haven't killed any of them outright; but there's one of them never'll do much more work, I reckon."

He then told John the whole story. "I'm sorry I hurt that fellow so much; there was no need of it, for I could have handled them without hurting them so much; but they frightened Sally so, and used such language to her, that I got my temper up, and then they had to take it."

"These same chaps (at least I think they are the ones) went to a house on Monhegan, and frightened a woman who was in a delicate condition, so that she afterwards died. Boy, what is that vessel's name?"

"The Albatross, sir."

"That's the name; I remember now. Pity you hadn't killed him."

"Come, Ben," said Sally, "you and John go out

Hosted by Google

doors and talk; I want to clean up here; and when it's dinner-time I'll call you."

"I can't stop," replied John; "I came to borrow your menhaden net, Ben, to catch some bait to-night, for I must go out in the morning."

"Well, then, just stay where you are to-night; when the flood tide makes, there will be any quantity of menhaden round the Little Bull, and I'll help you sweep round the school, and then you can go off as early as you like in the morning."

When they left the house, the boy offered to assist Sally in cleaning the floor, brought her wood and water, and put the dishes on the table.

When he saw how different Ben appeared, now that his anger had cooled, he shrank from the idea of leaving them and going back to his prison. The tide was fast making, and the vessel would soon be afloat; and as he looked out of the door and saw that the vessel, which had lain on her broadside on the beach, had now righted up, he approached Sally, and, with tears in his eyes, said, "Mrs. Rhines, I don't want to go with those men. I'm afraid some time when they are drunk they'll kill me; I don't want to be with such bad men. Can't you let me stay with you? I'll do all the chores; and I can catch fish, cut wood and bring it

Hosted by Google

in, and do anything that I am able, or that you will show me how to do."

Sally, who had taken to the boy the moment she had a good look at him, and heard him speak, was deeply moved by his distress. She reflected a moment, and replied, "I should be willing, with all my heart; I will see what Mr. Rhines says. Ben," said she, going out to where he was talking with John, "that boy wants to stay with us; he is, I believe, a real good boy; he is afraid those fellows will kill him, or will be hauled up for their wickedness, and he shall have to suffer with them."

"There's a great risk in taking up with a boy like that; we can't know anything about him; they all tell a good story."

"I know that's a good boy, Ben; I feel it in my bones."

"It will make you a great deal of work, Sally; you will have to spin and weave, make clothes, knit stockings, and wash for him."

"And he'll bring in wood and water, churn, feed the hogs, and help me. I know what it is to take care of a boy; I've taken care of all ours. I made every stitch of clothes that our Sam wore till I was married; besides, when you begin to plant and sow, such a boy will be a great help."

Hosted by Google

"That is all true, Sally; and I would not hesitate a moment if I knew he was a good boy; but suppose he should turn out like that Pete, Uncle Smullen and his wife did so much for, and got no thanks for; and even if he is good, boys that have got a notion of running about can't stay long in a place, and settle themselves down to steady work; they want to be among folks, and with other boys. Now, we might take him, and you go to work, as I know you would, and clothe him all up, and then he get lonesome on this island, get on board some vessel, and run off."

"It seems to me, Ben, that this poor little boy, without 'kith or kin,' has been thrown into our hands by the providence of God, and, if we let him go back to these wretches, when we can keep him just as well as not, and drive the poor little harmless, trembling thing from our threshold, with the tears on his cheeks, that we shall not prosper, and ought not to expect to."

"Enough said; I'll take him."

"You'll be kind to him — won't you? because he trembles so every time you speak to him."

"I've not altered my nature, Sally, because I treated those villains as they deserved."

When Sally came back, she wanted to press the

Hosted by Google

wanderer to her heart; but she recalled Ben's caution, and merely said, "My husband is willing you should stay with us, and I hope you will try and be a good boy."

A flush of inexpressible joy lit up the pale features of the forlorn boy at these words, and, too full to speak much, he said, "O, how much I thank you!" and sitting down, covered his face with his hands, while tears of joy ran through his fingers from an overcharged heart, that had shed so many tears of bitter agony that day.

The vessel was now afloat, and, spreading her sails, was soon out of sight, to the great relief of the boy, who could hardly believe himself safe as long as she remained in the harbor.

Ben and John took him with them when they went to sweep for menhaden, and found that he could pull an oar, was handy in a boat, and knew how to dress the fish for bait. The nights were now cool, and the boy had brought in a good pile of wood. They made a cheerful fire after supper, and Ben asked him some questions in respect to his history. He told them his father was a basket-maker; that all their people had followed that business, which was good in England, where wood was scarce; and baskets and sacks were used to

Hosted by Google

transport everything, instead of barrels and boxes, as in this country. They made a comfortable living, his father employing several hands; and he was sent to school till he was eleven years of age; then his father put him to work in the shop to learn the trade.

"I should not think it was much of a trade," said Ben; "I can make a good basket."

"But not such baskets as they make there," replied the boy. "The basket-makers there make a great many other things besides. My father was pressed into the navy, and, before the vessel had got out of the channel, was killed in an action with a French frigate. My mother had a brother in St. John's. She sold her effects, put the younger children out, and spent nearly all the money she had to pay our passage; but when we got over, my uncle had gone to Melbourne. Soon after that my mother took sick and died."

"Was she a Christian woman?" asked Sally.

"Yes; she belonged to the Wesleyan Methodists; so did my father. If my poor mother had died at home, she would have had friends to take care of her, and to follow her to the grave, for everybody loved her; but there was nobody but me to do anything for her; and only myself and

Hosted by Google

the Irish woman we hired a room of went to the grave. It took all but one pound to pay the rent, and expenses of my mother's funeral. The landlady permitted me to sleep on the foot of her bed, with my head on a chair, because I carried her washing home, and her husband's dinner to him, for he worked in a foundery."

"Couldn't you find any work?" said Ben.

"No, sir; no steady work: I wandered about the streets and wharves, getting a day's work now and then, till my money was all gone, and then I was glad to ship in the Albatross as cook."

"Who owned the vessel?" asked Ben.

"They said the captain bought her; he seemed to have money enough. She was an old condemned fisherman; if we pumped her out dry at night, the water would be up to the cuddy floor in the morning."

"Where did they belong?"

"I don't know, sir; the captain was Portuguese; his name was Antonio. They had all been together in a slaver, and the captain was mate of her; and from things they used to say, I think they must have been pirates."

"How did they treat you?"

"They treated me very well when they were

Hosted by Google

sober, but when they were drunk I used to be afraid they would kill me. They would hold me, and spit tobacco juice in my eyes, and pour liquor down my throat, and make me drunk, which was the worst of all, for I had promised my mother I would never drink."

"If they poured it down your throat against your will, that wasn't breaking your promise," said Sally.

"One night I was so afraid of them that I jumped overboard and swam under the stern, holding on to the rudder; and I heard them talking, and the captain began to cry and take on at a great rate. After they had gone to sleep, I swam to the cable and got on board."

"Why didn't you swim ashore?"

"It was too far; we were way off on the fishing ground; the water was cold, and I should have been chilled to death. My mother, before she died, told me to read the Bible, and pray to God when trouble came, and He would take care of me; but I think He must have forgotten me, for though I have prayed to Him every day, I have found nothing but misery ever since she died; and now I'm friendless and alone in a strange land."

"No, you ain't!" cried Sally, drawing him

Hosted by Google

towards her, and kissing his forehead, "for I will be a mother to you."

At this, the first word of kindly sympathy the poor boy had heard since his mother died, he hid his face in her lap, and sobbed aloud. Sally flung her apron over his head, and patted him, and in a few moments, worn out with all he had passed through that day, he fell asleep. As they had but two bedsteads in the house, one in the corner of the kitchen, where Ben and his wife slept, and the other a spare bed in the front room, which was partly filled with shingles and staves, and was parlor, bedroom, and workshop, Sally had made a bed for him in the garret, and Ben, taking him carefully in his arms, carried him up and placed him on it.

"It's my opinion, Ben," said John, "that is a good boy, and that it will be a good thing for you and him both that he has fallen in here; that boy never was brought up on a dunghill, I know; he's smart, too. Did you see how handy he takes hold of an oar? Why, he can dress a fish as quick as I can."

"I took him at first," replied Ben, "for one of these Liverpool wharf-rats, that are rotten before they are ripe; but his story holds together well, and he tells it right; he don't make out that he

Hosted by Google

belongs to some great family, or call upon God Almighty, as such ones generally do when they are going to tell some great lie."

"He looks you right in the face, too," said John; "I like that; yes, and then he didn't begin to pour out blessings on your head; perhaps he'll show his gratitude in some other way."

Sally had made a piece of nice fulled cloth that summer, and from it she soon made Charlie breeches and a long jacket. She also made him a shirt from some cloth, part linen and part woollen; and as the weather was coming cool, and she had no time to knit a pair of stockings, she made him a pair from some of Ben's old ones. She then cut his hair, and knit him a pair of mittens, and Ben made him a pair of shoes.

He almost worshipped Sally, calling her mother, and being every moment on the watch to oblige her, and anticipate her wishes. But in respect to Ben, he seemed timid, always calling him Mr. Rhines, or captain, and starting nervously oftentimes when he spoke to him. He evidently could not forget the terrible impression made upon his mind when he supposed Ben would kill him.

Sally felt grieved at this, and she saw that it worried her husband.

Hosted by Google

One evening, when he patted him on the head, and praised him for something that he had done that day, Sally made a sign to Ben that he should take the boy on his knee, which he did, when Charlie put his arms around his neck (that is, as far as they would reach), and ever after that called him father.

When John came to bring the net home, Charles met him at the shore.

"Good morning, Captain Strout!"

"Good morning, my lad; how do you like Elm Island?"

"It is such a nice place! O, I'm as happy as the days are long! I hope I've had all my sorrows!"

"If you have, you've had good luck; better than most people; for you've got through before the most of people's trials begin. Now, my lad, you have a chance to make something of yourself. If you stay here, and fall into the ways of our people, it will make a man of you, and you will find friends, for everybody is respected here that works. I have known Mr. Rhines ever since he was a boy; have been shipmate with him, and owe my life to him. Though he's a hard master to such reprobates as those you came with, he is kind to everybody that does right."

Hosted by Google

"I think, captain, that he is like some of those good giants I've heard my grandmother tell about in England, that went about killing dragons, wicked giants, and robbers, and protecting innocent people."

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER III.

JOHN GOES TO SEE THE NEW BOY.

One of old Mr. Yelf's grandsons was going as cook with John Strout; and in the morning, when John came alongside his vessel, after his return from Elm Island with the net and fish, he found the old gentleman on board, who had come to bring his grandson. He told the old man the story as it really was, but he was quite hard of hearing, and John was in a hurry, and could not stop to repeat and explain, and thus he obtained a very confused and incorrect account of it. John made sail and went out fishing, and the old gentleman hastened ashore to give a most exaggerated account, — to which, every one adding a little as it went from mouth to mouth, it at length assumed monstrous proportions.

Captain Rhines was as anxious to get accurate information as anybody, but felt no alarm, because all the reports agreed in this, that the pirates had the worst of it, and that neither Ben nor Sally was

Hosted by Google

injured. He could not leave to go on, as he had stripped the shingles from the roof of his house, and was trying to get it re-shingled before a storm should come. John had heard about the new boy, and that John Strout was very much pleased with him, and he was very anxious to get on there and see him, for he had a presentiment that they were made for each other, and was prepared to like him, even before seeing him.

Captain Rhines, at length worn out with the solicitations of John, which were aided by his own desire to know the truth of the matter, went over to Uncle Isaac's, and said to him, "I wish you would take John and my canoe, and go over to the island (for I can't go), and see how many Ben's killed, or if he's killed anybody; and about that boy, or if there is any boy. John is teasing me to death about it, and he won't be able to do any work till that is settled; for he's thinking so much about it, he can't drive a nail into a shingle without pounding his fingers."

"Well, I should like to know myself as much as anybody; I'll be along right after dinner."

"I'm going to put some squashes and potatoes in the canoe, for he hasn't planted a hill of anything this year; I don't see how people can live so. I

Hosted by Google

should think, when he has such a nice place for a garden under the ledge, he would have a few peas and potatoes."

"Ben believes in doing one thing at a time; and a mast that he can cut in an hour will buy as much garden stuff as he would raise in a whole summer. He won't dabble with farming till the island is his, and then you'll see some of the tallest kind of farming, or I'll miss my guess."

All the way to the island John was remarkably silent, apparently engaged in deep thought. At length he said, "Uncle Isaac, is it right to like an Englishmun?"

"Bless me! yes; what is the boy thinking about?"

"We've just done fighting and killing the Englishmun, and they've been killing our people, and wanted to hang General Washington, and I didn't know as it would be right to like 'em; and they say this boy is an Englishmun."

"It isn't the nation, John, it's the character, that makes a person good or bad; your grandfather and mine were both Englishmun; so you need not be afraid to like him on that account."

When they landed Ben was eating supper. "You've come in good time," he said; "sit down with us."

Hosted by Google

The moment supper was over, Uncle Isaac said, "Now, I want to hear all about the pirates, for there are all sorts of stories going; it's all come through Uncle Yelf, and he has drunk so much rum that he's lost what little wit he ever had; and he never had brains enough to cover a beech leaf, and is deaf to boot."

They told him the story from beginning to end.

"It was a good thing for me, at any rate," said Ben, in conclusion; "for they left a new cable and anchor on the beach, and a first-rate little boy behind them."

"It's amazing how things will gain by going," said Uncle Isaac. "We heard that there was a dozen pirates landed, and that one of them got Sally by the hair, pulled her down on her knees, and was going to cut her head off with his cutlass, when you come running in from the woods, and broke his neck short off over your knee, smashed another one's brains out against the jambs, and threw the grindstone at another and killed him; the rest run to the vessel, but before they could get the anchor you was on board; then they run below, and you fastened them in; that there was a woman and a little boy in the vessel, that they had prisoners; and that they fired at you and missed,

Hosted by Google

and the bullet went into her side; and that then you took the boy, and fastened them all into the cuddy, and brought the ones you had killed ashore, and set fire to the vessel, and burnt them all up together; and a great many believed it, because they saw a fire on here; but your father said he didn't believe a word of it, for you wasn't such a fool as to burn up a vessel; and if the men were armed they could have shot you."

"I was burning some brush that was in my way," said Ben; "that was the fire they saw."

"So this is the boy," said Uncle Isaac, turning to Charlie; "well, I wish you well; I hear that you are a good boy, and industrious, and those are great things. I was a poor boy at your age, and had nothing but my hands, as you have; but, by God's blessing, I have got along, and so will you, and be happy and respected, for you've come to a good country, a better one for laboring people than the one you have left. Poor men get rich here, but poor people grow poorer there, and sometimes starve to death, which is awful in a place that pretends to be a Christian country; but you see there's too many sheep in the pasture — they are too thick; it ain't so here — there's room enough."

In the mean time the two boys stood — the one

Hosted by Google

beside Sally's chair, and the other by Ben's — eying one another, and each longing to hear the other speak. John thought he had never seen a finer looking boy than Charlie, and Charlie was internally paying the same compliment to John.

"Uncle Isaac," whispered Sally, "how shall we get these boys together? shall I introduce them?"

"Nonsense; I'll soon fix that. Ben, have you got a bushel basket?"

"Yes."

"Well, let this youngster — What's your first name, my lad?"

"Charles, sir."

"Well, let Charles go down with John to the canoe, and fetch up some things your father sent over. That's the way," said Uncle Isaac; "they don't want any of our help; they will take care of themselves."

The two boys took the basket, and proceeded to the canoe. John, feeling that as he was a native, and Charles a stranger, it was his duty to speak first, by way of breaking the silence, which was getting to be oppressive, said, "How old be you?"

"Fifteen," was the reply.

"I'm fourteen," said John; "shall be fifteen in July."

Hosted by Google

"I shall be sixteen next Michaelmas."

"What do you mean by Michaelmas, Charles?"

"Why, St. Michael's Day, the 29th of September."

"Well, what does it mean?"

"I don't know. All I know is, that in England everybody that can get it eats a goose that day, and if you do you'll have enough all the year round. Do you know how to row?"

"Yes; I can row cross-handed, and scull. Can you scull a gunning float?"

"I never saw one; what are they for?"

"They are made like a canoe, only smaller and lighter; and there's a scull-hole in the stern, just above the water, to put the oar through; and then we lie down on our backs in the bottom, and take the oar over our shoulder, and scull up to the sea-fowl, and shoot them. Don't they go gunning in your country?"

"The great folks do; but the poor folks and common people are not allowed to."

"That's a queer country; I wouldn't like to live in such a country as that. Do you know how to shoot?"

"No; I never fired a gun in my life; you couldn't shoot a sparrow — I was going to say a

Hosted by Google

'bumble-bee' — in England, without being taken up."

"What did you do?"

"I made baskets. Can you wrestle?"

"Yes. Wouldn't you like to learn to shoot?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll show you some time what I know. Do you know how to mow or reap?"

"No."

"Nor chop?"

"No. I've got a plenty to learn — haven't I?"

"I should think you had."

They were a long time getting up the things; but when they were all up, Charles said to his mother, "Can John and I go over to the White Bull?"

"Yes; and when it is time to come back I'll blow the horn for you."

They had taken supper early; and as Uncle Isaac said he had as "lieves" go over in the evening as at any time, it being bright starlight, she did not blow the horn till dark.

"Look there," said Sally, pointing to the shore, soon after she had blown the horn. The boys were returning with their arms over each other's neck.

Hosted by Google

"I'm so glad they take to one another," said she. "John thinks it's the greatest happiness of life to come over here; we are as glad to see him as he is to come; and, if he likes Charlie, he'll want to come more than ever; won't they have good times!"

"Uncle Isaac," said John, as they were rowing home, "don't you love to be out on the water in the night among the stars?"

"Yes, I do, John; and I like to go along the edge of thick woods, when there's a bright moon, and watch the shadow on the water. But I think the best of all is, to go in a birch, — they don't make any noise, and there's no splashing of oars; but they go along just like a bird, and they float in so little water that you can go along the very edge of the beach, and listen to the noise of the water on the rocks, and the little breath of wind among the trees. I think I have the best thoughts then I ever have; I feel solemn, but I feel happy, too. I think sometimes, if ministers could be in some of the places, and have some of the feelings we ignorant people have, and we could have some of their learning to go with our feelings, it would be better for both. I am not a good man; but I have often kneeled down in the woods, in the

Hosted by Google

moonlight, hundreds of miles from any house, in the trackless forest, and prayed to God, and it has done me good."

"Uncle Isaac, I love to hear you talk about such things."

"It is talk that won't do either of us any harm, John; and I trust you are not a prayerless, as I know you are not a thoughtless, boy."

"I say the Lord's prayer, as my mother taught me. Uncle Isaac, are you in any hurry to get home?"

"No; I don't care if we don't get home till midnight."

"Then let us talk; it's calm; let her drift; I want to tell you what I think. I think Charles and I were made for each other; it seems so to me, and I can't make it seem any other way. Don't you like him?"

"Why, I haven't seen enough of him to know yet; I never set eyes on him till about three hours ago. They say a person is known by the company he keeps, and he certainly came in very bad company."

"You say that just to plague me; you don't believe in your heart that he went with those men because he liked them, or that he is a bad boy."

Hosted by Google

"I like his appearance, and I think he'll turn out to be a good boy. He has, no doubt, been obliged to take up with company that was not his own choice, for misery makes strange bedfellows."

"*Turn out to be a good boy!* He's a good boy *now!* I know he is; he's good clear through!"

"Well, time will show."

John, finding it impossible to inspire Uncle Isaac with his own enthusiastic confidence, let the matter drop, and for a while they rowed on in silence. At length John said, "I tell you what makes me think that boy is a good friend for me; he knows a great many things that I don't know, and I know a great many things that he don't. I know he's tender-hearted."

"How do you know that?"

"I asked him if he had any mother, and he almost cried when he told me she was dead. Now, when a boy loves his mother, isn't it a good sign?"

"The best sign in the world, John."

"And then the way he talked about her, and about good things. I don't know as he's a religious boy, — what mother calls pious, — but I know he's a good boy; you know anybody can tell."

Hosted by Google

"Well, John, I guess you're right; you have found out more about him in one hour than I could in six months."

"Well, we're bound to be thick together, I know that."

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER IV.

GRIT AND GRATITUDE.

It was now the month of October. The early frosts had rendered the air sharp and bracing. The nights were long, affording abundance of sleep, and the forests were clothed in all the tints of autumn. Ben, encouraged by the unexpected success he had met with in the sale of his timber, assured that his wife was contented and happy, and his mind buoyant with hope, drove the axe through the timber in very wantonness of strength. It was no trifling addition to his happiness to find that Charlie was not only industrious, but had a natural aptitude for the use of tools.

He bought him a light, keen-tempered axe, that he might cut up the small wood at the door, and split up oven-wood for Sally. When he brought the axe from the smith's, he said to Charles, "I will put a handle in it, and then we will grind it."

"I think," he replied, "that I can put a handle in it, if you will tell me what kind of wood to make

Hosted by Google

it of." Charles was not acquainted with the different sorts of trees in this country.

"There is no white oak on the island," said Ben; "but here is a straight-grained hornbeam: I will take that."

He cut down the tree, and splitting from it a suitable piece, left the boy to make it himself. When he came in to dinner, the boy had made the handle, and put it in the axe. Ben examined it with surprise.

"I couldn't have made it any better myself," he said. They now ground the axe, and Charlie went into the woods every day with Ben. He would chop into one side of the tree what little he was able, while Ben chopped into the other; but when it was down, he was quite useful in trimming off the limbs with his little axe: thus he learned to strike true, and to chop with either hand forward.

Ben, every once in a while, came across a maple or oak, that stood in the way: as he knew that by and by he should want a cart, plough, harrow, and other tools, he cut them, and taking them to the mill with his logs, had them sawed into joist and plank of different dimensions, and then put them in the front room to season under cover, that they might not warp or crack.

Hosted by Google

Charlie could not accomplish much in the woods, because he had not yet become accustomed to chopping, and was not strong enough; yet it was very pleasant for Ben to have company. But there were other ways in which, boy as he was, he was exceedingly useful, and a source of direct profit, which may serve to show to any little boy who reads this, how much a boy, who has the will and pluck, may do. In the first place he took care of the hens. Now, there never were any hens that enjoyed themselves better, or laid more eggs, than Charlie's. The stumps of the trees Ben had cut were alive with bugs and wood-worms, also sow-bugs, that harbored in the decayed roots; here the hens scratched, and scratched, and feasted. "Cock-a-doodle-do!" cries the rooster; "I've found some worms! and all the hens would run and gobble them up. You will remember that the ledge, in which the middle ridge terminated, was perpendicular; not a breath of north or east wind could get there, because all back of it was forest, and there in the hot sun the hens dug holes, and rolled in the mellow earth, where, even in winter, it was warm when the sun shone, and Charlie scraped the snow away for them down to the ground; they could also go to the beach and get gravel, as the island

Hosted by Google

was so far at sea that there was seldom any ice on the beach.

Charlie also milked, and took care of the calf which they were raising, and fed him with meal and potatoes. Hens like fish as well as cats, and he caught flounders, tom-cod, and dug clams for them, so that they laid most all winter. This was a great help to Sally, as Charlie's coming into the family made her a great deal more work, for she had stockings and mittens to knit, and cloth to spin and weave, to make clothes for him. She had to do it, too, at a great disadvantage; for, as they had no sheep, and raised no flax, and had no loom, she was obliged to buy the wool and flax, and send the yarn to her mother to weave. This took a great deal of time, because her mother was only able to do Sally's work after she had done her own.

Charlie cut all the wood, except the large logs: these Ben cut, and Charlie hauled them in on a hand-sled. Now, all this saved Ben's time; but he did more: he dug clams for chowder, and caught lobsters. The rocks on the White Bull were a great resort of lobsters; many were found under the eel-grass and the projections of the rocks. Whenever he saw a bunch in the eel-grass, he would pull it away and find a great lobster, which he would put

Hosted by Google

in his basket. He would also peep under the rocks, and say, "I see you, old fellow," and with his flounder-spear pick out another. He also caught smelts, which are a first-rate pan fish. Round the points of the ledges were cunners (sea-perch) and cod: these he caught also. This all went directly to the support of the family.

Children reared in hardship, and thrown upon their own resources, develop fast; and never was Charlie more happy than when, bringing home a mess of fish, he felt he was of direct benefit to his benefactors. In the enjoyment of abundance of food, warm clothes, plenty of sleep, and breathing the bracing sea air, with the consciousness that he was useful and beloved, he began to grow with great rapidity, and increase in vigor and enterprise every day. When he first came he hardly dared speak above his breath, and the most he attempted was a sickly smile. But now he sang at his work or play (for he had good ear and voice), could laugh as merry as Sally herself, and often put the squawks in an uproar with his merriment. His pale cheeks had regained their color, and his eyes all the fire of youth, for he loved, and felt that he was beloved, and his finely-cut and delicate features were full of expression.

Hosted by Google

Charlie, during his wandering life, had acquired considerable experience in fishing. Within less than a mile of the island was an excellent fishing-ground, where schools of large codfish would soon come to feed. Charlie knew, if he could catch these, it would not only be a valuable supply of food for winter, but they would sell for cash at the westward, or at the store for half cash and half groceries.

But the great difficulty in the way was, he could not venture to go there in the canoe. Ben was a giant, and everything he worked with was made upon a corresponding scale. Charlie could hardly lift his axe. His canoe was twenty-five feet in length, and the blades of the oars were twice as wide as common, so that they might take stronger hold of the water. Ben made them before he went to Boston, that, if the wind came to the north-west, he might be able to exert all his strength; otherwise, in a severe blow, he would have only pulled the oars through the water without forcing the boat ahead.

Charlie could hardly move this great thing in the harbor, much less in a sea, and against the wind.

Joe Griffin now came to chop, which increased

Hosted by Google

Charlie's anxiety to catch the fish, as there were more mouths to fill, and Joe's held a great deal. He at length broached the matter to Ben, saying, if he only had a light canoe, that he could pull, he could catch fish, for he had been used to fishing.

"I would make you one," said Ben, "if I had time; but Joe is here, and the oxen are coming from the main, and I must chop."

"But," persisted Charlie, "I could dig it out; if you told me how, I think I could make the outside."

"Well," said Ben, pleased with the boy's evident anxiety to be useful, "I will cut the tree, and you can be working it out, and we will help you in rainy days, and at odd times."

"O, no, don't," said Charlie; "I want to cut the tree, and make it all clear from the stump."

"Why, Charlie, it takes the largest kind of trees to make a canoe; it's no use to cut a valuable tree to make a plaything; it ought to be as large as you can cleverly pull, or you'll outgrow it. It will take you a week to cut down such a tree with your little axe."

"No matter; do let me try."

Ben picked out the tree, marked out the direction of the kerf on the bark with his axe, and left

Hosted by Google

him. When Charlie came in to dinner, the perspiration stood in drops on his face, and he was as red as a turkey-cock.

"Well," said Joe, "have you got through the bark?"

"Almost," replied Charlie.

At night the boy showed evident signs of fatigue.

"Let me look at your hands," said Ben. There were large blisters on each; he pricked them with a needle, and Sally rubbed some butter on them.

"I'll give you a dozen or two of my round cuts in the morning," said Joe.

"O, no; I don't want you to. I can cut it down."

"Perhaps I shall go out after you are abed, and cut it down."

"O, don't," cried the boy, his eyes filling with tears at the very possibility of such a catastrophe.

"He don't mean to do any such thing," said Sally; "he's only in fun; nobody shall touch the tree."

Relying on her assurance, the wearied boy went to bed.

"He'll be sore enough in the morning," said Joe; "but I like his grit, any how."

"Don't tease him too much, Joe," said Sally;

Hosted by Google

"he's a tender-hearted thing, and takes everything in earnest."

"Well, I won't, if I can help it."

The next day, at dinner, Charlie said to Ben, "I have cut the whole length of the axe-handle on both sides; can't I cut on the edges?"

"No; for then you cannot tell which way it will fall; and it might fall on you and kill you. If you're going to be such a chopper, you must have an axe-handle as long as ours; take this afternoon and make one, and that will rest you.

Charlie did so, and in the morning, as soon as he could see, was in the woods. About nine o'clock the enormous tree began to totter. He had received a promise from Ben that nobody should come near him till the tree was down. He stood at the end of the kerf, just where he had been told to, and watched the top of the tree as it wavered in the air, trembling all over, half with fear, and half with excitement, while the perspiration, unheeded, dropped from his chin. Still the enormous tree did not fall. Charlie put his shoulder against it, and when he felt it waver, pushed till the sparks came in his eyes; but he soon found this was useless. He didn't like to stand right in front and cut; at length, summoning all his resolution, he

Hosted by Google

stepped to the larger kerf, on the side towards which he expected it would fall, and, with set teeth, plied the axe: snap went the wood; he jumped aside; the top now began evidently to incline; crack! crack! and then with a great crash, that made the boy's heart leap into his throat, the enormous cone fell, crushing the smaller growth, and sending broken limbs thirty feet in the air, and shaking the ground all around. The boy leaped upon the prostrate tree, and burst into loud cheers. It was the battle of Waterloo to him.

"Let us go and see," said Ben; "it will do him so much good."

"You've done well, Charlie," said Joe; "you never will cut many bigger trees than that, if you work in the woods all your lifetime."

"Now, father, where shall I cut it off?"

Ben marked the place. "You had better go in now, Charlie, and rest till dinner-time, and cool off."

"I ain't a bit tired," said the proud, resolute boy; but Ben made him go in, when he found, after the excitement was over, that an hour or two of rest did not come amiss, for he laid down before the fire, and, falling asleep, did not wake till dinner-time. After dinner he began to dig it out, and, under Ben's direction, hewed off a good deal of the

Hosted by Google

CHARLIE'S BIG JOB. — Page 54.

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

outside. Ben then took it on his shoulder, and carried it into the front room, so that he could work on it rainy days and evenings till it was done. He made the oars himself, and seats and thole-pins, and dug it out, so that it was very light for a canoe; and, for fear it might split, Ben made some oak knees and put in it. When put into the water she was found to be stiff, and row easy.

No captain was ever prouder of his new ship than was Charlie of his canoe. It was his own (the first thing he had ever owned), and by the best possible right, for he had made it from the stump.

"There's a mechanical principle in that boy, Ben," said Joe; "do you see how naturally he takes to tools, and what good proportions there is to them oars, and how true the bevel is on the blades, and how neat he cut the head and stern boards into that canoe?"

There was nothing Charlie now longed for so much as a calm day. In the mean time he made himself a fisherman's anchor. He took an oak limb, which was a little sweeping, made it flat, and broader than it was thick, and sharpened the ends; then he procured a crotch, and boring two holes in the flat piece, put a flat stone, larger a little than

Hosted by Google

the piece of flat wood, edgeway upon it, and run the two forks of the crotch down each side of the stone, and through the holes, and wedged them, and put a wooden pin through to hold them. When this was thrown overboard, the sharp points of the wood would stick into the bottom, and the weight of the stone would hold them there. The stone, being so much larger than the cross-piece of wood, always brought the wood into the ground. These anchors, when the bottom is rocky, are much better than iron ones, as you can pull them out of the rocks, or pull them to pieces; and they will hold a boat as long as it is safe to stay, or smooth enough to fish; whereas an iron one will often stick fast in the rocks, and you must cut your cable. Hence these sort of anchors are much used by fishermen who are often round the rocks; besides, they cost nothing but the making.

The pleasant day came at last; by light Charlie was on the fishing-ground, all in sight of the house. By two o'clock in the afternoon he was rowing home with three hundred weight of fish. A prouder boy there never was, as he came home before a pleasant southerly wind, not having to pull any, only just to steady the boat with the oars. Every few moments he kept looking over his

Hosted by Google

shoulder to see if anybody saw him; but Ben and Joe were where they could not see him. By and by he saw Sally come to the door and look; he put his cap on an oar, and held it up; she waved her hand to him, caught up some dry brush, and ran in. Presently he saw a black smoke. "She's putting on the tea-kettle to get me a good hot supper. Won't it go good? for haven't I earned it?" said he, as he glanced at the codfish, some of which he had hard work to master, and get into the boat, they were so large. By the time he had eaten his supper and dressed his fish, the men came in from their work, when he received many and well-deserved praises for his day's work.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER V.

CHARLES RETURNS JOHN'S VISIT.

THE orphan boy, whom his mother in her dying moments committed in faith to God, had fallen into good hands. He, who through storm and tempest directs the sea-bird to her nest amid the breakers, and hears her young ones when they cry in their lonely nest on the ocean rock, had numbered his steps. Ben knew how to treat a boy, because he liked them, and understood their feelings.

The reason John was so much attached to his brother Ben, who was so much older, arose, not merely from his being his brother, but because Ben not only loved him, but always made due allowance for a boy's nature and feelings. The amusements and employments of men, and boys also, in those old times, were not so far apart as they are now; they could fish and hunt in company, and the boy could be very useful to the man, and this brought them together, and kept their mutual sym-

Hosted by Google

pathies alive and fresh. He did not, therefore, because Charles had caught three hundred weight of fish, tell him he must be up by daylight the next morning and catch four hundred; he knew boys better than that; knew that while Charles needed no other stimulus than his own noble, grateful heart to urge him on to exertions, yet he was aching to let John know what he had done. He said to him, "Well, Charles, we'll have a chowder out of the heads of some of these biggest cod (there's nothing equal to a cod's head for a chowder), and save a couple to fry, and take the rest over to the main land in the morning; you can go to the house and get John to go to the store with you, and sell them, and get half money and the rest in groceries. You can stay all night with John, and come off the next morning."

Charles's eyes flashed with delight at this, and he could hardly contain himself till Ben was out of sight; and then he got behind a bush and jumped right up and down with delight. He lost no time in going to tell the good news to Sally, between whom and himself there were no secrets, but the most perfect sympathy.

"O, mother!" he cried, "don't you think father's going to let me take the fish to the store, and stay

Hosted by Google

all night! *only think!* stay all night with John, mother!"

"Sally added (if possible) to his happiness by saying, "I'm glad of it, Charlie, for I want some errands done; and I want you to take over some eggs and butter, and get some coffee, sugar, and flax, and carry some yarn to Hannah Murch, for her to weave for me. Now you see how much help you can be."

"Yes, mother; and what a good thing it is to have my canoe to go in, and catch fish to sell, and get things; it pays — don't it?"

"I guess it does pay; for, if you didn't go, Ben would have to leave his work and go."

"And I shall see Mr. Murch?"

"Yes; John will go over there with you; and I'll get breakfast by daylight, so that you can make a long day of it."

"Mother, I like Mr. Murch; he's such a pleasant way, and he says such cute things, somehow you can't help liking him; when I hear him, it seems just as if something was drawing me right to him. Don't you like him, mother?"

"Like him! I love him, Charlie! After my father died, I don't know what my mother would have done, if it had not been for Uncle Isaac. He

Hosted by Google

used to come over and tell her to trust in God, and encourage her; tell Sam what to do, and plough for us, sow our grain, shear the sheep, and help us every way."

"Perhaps he'll like me, and let me call him Uncle Isaac, same as John does, when he's acquainted with me."

"I dare say he will."

"Mother, does John ever come over here alone?"

"He never has; his folks don't like to have him."

"Then I shall do to-morrow more than he's ever done; leastways, I'll try."

"I don't know as it is hardly the thing for you to go; 'tis a good ways."

"It is not much farther than I go a fishing. I wish you could see how I can make my canoe *hum*, if I have a mind to; come down to the shore just a minute, and see how quick I can pull over to the White Bull and back."

Sally went down. Charlie got into the canoe, took his oars, spit on his hands, and stretched himself for a mighty effort. The canoe went through the water in fine style; but, when about half way to the Bull, one of the thole-pins broke short off, Charlie went over backwards into the bottom of the canoe, and had to paddle back with one oar.

Hosted by Google

"Never mind, Charlie," said she; "I can see that you make her go like anything."

"I'm glad it broke now, and not when I was off in the bay," said he, to hide his mortification, and resolved next time he undertook to show off to look well to his thole-pins. He didn't sleep much that night. I'll let John know, thought he, as he lay in bed anticipating the morrow, that I can do something besides make baskets; he didn't seem to think much of that. He thought I had a great deal to learn, but I'll let him know I've learned something already. The next morning was fair, and he was off by sunrise. When he came to the other side, John received him with great pleasure; and as they were just at breakfast, Captain Rhines insisted on having Charlie sit up with them, saying that a boy who was growing could eat any time, especially when he had pulled six miles.

"Did you come in Ben's big canoe?"

"No, sir; the oars are so large I can hardly lift them."

"So I thought; but what did you come in?"

"My own canoe, sir."

"Has Ben made you a canoe so quick?"

"No, sir; I made it myself; but he showed me."

"Whew! Who cut the tree down?"

Hosted by Google

"I did, sir."

"What do you think of that, John?"

John and Charles went to the store, and sold the fish and other things; then John showed Charles his gun, and yoke of steers he was raising; then they yoked them up, and put them on to a light sled, that they could haul on the bare ground, and gave Charles a ride. He also showed him his powder-horn, and all his playthings, and a tame gray squirrel, and hens. Then they went to the shore and saw John's gunning float; and John made Charles lie down in the bottom of her, and showed him how to scull. Putting the sail up, they sailed round the bay; and going round a little point, they saw some birds; they then lay down in the float, and John sculled up to them, and shot two. This excited Charlie very much. As he took the dead birds in his fingers, the passion for shooting, for which he had never felt the least inclination, seemed to be inspired by the very contact.

"We will have them for dinner," said John; "let us go home, so that mother will have time to cook them."

This was all new to Charlie, for Ben had been too busy to gun since he came.

"Are they good to eat?" asked Charlie.

Hosted by Google

"First rate; and you can sell them at the store. The feathers fetch a first-rate price at the westward, and you can sell them at Witchcassett (Wiscasset) to the English vessels."

"I never knew that before. If I could shoot, I might kill some on the island."

"I guess you could; there ain't such a place for gunning along shore."

"I might earn something to help along."

"Yes, indeed! Come, let us hurry home; I'll show you how to load and fire; and there are guns enough on the island; you can practise there; Ben will show you."

When they got home, Charlie fired John's gun five or six times, and learned to load it. "John," said his father at the dinner-table, "where is that little gun of yours?"

"Up chamber."

"Why don't you give that to Charles?"

"I will, father."

This was a gun that Ben had cut off, in order to make it lighter, and got Uncle Isaac to make a light stock for it, and given it to John; but his father having given him a larger and better one since he had become accustomed to gunning, he didn't use it.

Hosted by Google

"I'll give you a real nice horn, Charles," said the captain, "and you can scrape it and put the bottom in yourself."

After dinner they set out for Uncle Isaac's. They both rode on one horse; John got into the saddle, and Charles sat behind him on the pillion that Mrs. Rhines rode on when she went with her husband; he put his arms round John's waist just as the women did when they rode. They had fun enough going over, and when they arrived found Uncle Isaac making cider.

"Well, boys," said he, "you've come in the nick of time; I'm just going to lay up a cheese, and want some help to squat it."

"We'll help you," said John; "we're just the boys for that, and we can drink the cider, too."

A very few of our readers may know how they made cider in those days in the new settlements, and a good many may not even know how it is made now. We will describe his cider mill and press. At the end of his orchard was a large white oak tree, more than four feet through; under this he had placed a large trough, dug out of a log; in this he put the apples. He then took an oak log about six feet in length, and six inches through, in the middle of which a hole was bored, and a round

Hosted by Google

stick put through for a handle. A rope was attached to the top end, which reached, and was fastened, to a large branch of the tree. When he took hold of the handle, and struck the pounder down on the apples in the trough, the spring of the limb helped to lift it up, which was the hardest part of the work. Uncle Isaac had been pounding apples all the forenoon, and was now about to press them. Fred Williams now came along, whom John introduced to Charles as one of his playmates, and a real good boy. Fred blushed at this, for he felt that it had been but a very short time that he had deserved such a character.

Between the tree and the trough was an elevated platform of plank, jointed together, and watertight; on this was a square frame of boards, about four feet across, and six inches high; he laid some long straw on the edge of this frame, and then put in the apples; when the frame was full he turned the straw over the edge, and tucked it into the mass of bruised apples; he then lifted the hoop up the width of it, put on more straw, and piled it up again, till he had a square pile four feet high. The straw was to bind the edge, and keep the pomace from squatting out sidewise when he came to press it. This was called the cheese.

Hosted by Google

The boys helped him lift up the hoop, tuck in the straw, and shovel in the apples, with right good will. Planks were now placed upon the cheese, and some short blocks of timber on them, when the cider began to run from the edges through the straw, and was led by a gutter, which ran round the platform, into a half-hogshead tub.

Uncle Isaac now sat down to rest, and eat an apple, while the boys, providing themselves with straws, began to suck the cider from the gutter as though their lives depended on their diligence. Every once in a while you would hear a long-drawn sigh as they stopped to take breath. As the cheese had now settled together, and become a little firm, Uncle Isaac prepared to press it.

This is done nowadays with a screw, but it was not the fashion then. He had a white oak beam forty feet in length and ten inches square; one end of this enormous stick was placed in a mortise cut in the tree, the other on a horse. The stick extending over the middle of the cheese, a pair of shears and a tackle were placed at the end, and Uncle Isaac and the boys hoisted up the end of the great beam, took the horse away, and let the beam come down on the cheese, not very hard at first, but gradually; this set the cider running at a great

Hosted by Google

rate. As the cheese settled, he lifted the beam and put under more blocks, and at length he and the boys piled great rocks on the end of the beam, and got on themselves, till they squat it dry.

Nothing would do but they must stop to supper; Uncle Isaac would not hear to their going home.

"Only think," whispered Fred to John, "if we had succeeded in killing Uncle Isaac's orchard last spring, I shouldn't have been sucking cider and eating apples to-day."

"I've heard mother say," was the reply, "that a person couldn't injure another without injuring himself, and I believe it."

John told Uncle Isaac that Charles had cut down one of the biggest pines on the island, and made a float, oars and all, made an axe-handle, and caught three hundred weight of codfish.

When they went home, Uncle Isaac told the boys to fill their pockets with apples, and gave Charles a bag full and a jug of cider to carry to the island.

John and Charles slept together, and lay awake and talked half the night, laying plans for the future.

"I'll tell you what you can do, Charles; you can make a paddle, and cut a scull-hole in your canoe, and she'll make a first-rate gunning float."

Hosted by Google

"So she will; I never thought of that."

It seemed to the boys the shortest day they had ever spent; it certainly had been a very happy one. In the morning they separated, John going half way home with Charles in his float.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER VI.

CHARLIE IN A SNOW SQUALL.

CHARLES would have been more than human if he could have rested easy without a sail for his canoe, after seeing John's, and sailing with him in his float. He tried a hemlock bush, but he came near filling his boat by means of it. He didn't like to ask Sally to weave him cloth to make one, as she had to buy her flax and cotton, nor to ask Ben to let him sell fish for it. He therefore set his wits to work to compass his end. He noticed the bottom of the chairs, and asked Ben what they were made of: he told him, of basket-stuff, and how it was made.

He cut down an ash, pounded it, and stripping it very thin, wove it into a mat, and made a sail of it. A great deal of wind went through it, to be sure; but then it answered a very good purpose, and saved him a deal of rowing.

At length he espied a birch-bark dish, that Uncle Isaac had made for Sally to wash dishes in. He

Hosted by Google

examined it very attentively, and thought he had at last found the right stuff; but, to his great disappointment, the bark wouldn't run at that time of the year. Joe told him to make a fire and heat the tree, when he found it would run. He obtained some large sheets, and made it very thin; he found some difficulty in making the stitches hold, as the bark was so straight-grained it would split, and let the thread out; but he found a way to remedy this, by sewing some narrow strips of cloth with the bark at the seams and edges. He now found that he had a sail that was a great deal handsomer and lighter than the other, and that not a bit of wind could get through. Having by this time got a birch-bark fever, he made himself a hat of it, and a box to carry his dinner in.

He continued to fish every pleasant day, and, as fast as the fish were cured, he put them in the chamber; and the larger the pile grew, the more anxious he became to add to it.

There had been a week of moderate weather for the time of year, with light south and south-west winds, and Charles had caught a great many fish, sailing home every afternoon as grand as you please. At length there was an appearance of a change in the weather. Ben thought he had better not go;

Hosted by Google

but seeing he was eager to do so, did not prevent him. It was a dead calm when Charlie rowed on to his ground, and continued thus till nearly noon; but the clouds hung low, and the sun was partially hid. The fish bit well, and Charlie was too busy in hauling them in to take note of a black mass of clouds, which, having first gathered in the north-east, were gradually coming down the bay, accompanied with a black mist reaching from the water to the sky, till in an instant the wind struck with a savage shriek; the waters rolled up green and angry, and he was wrapped in a whirlwind of snow, so thick that he not only lost sight of the island, but could not even see three times the length of the canoe. His first impulse was to haul up his anchor and row for the island; but the moment he put his hand to the cable he was convinced that he could make no progress, nor even hold his own against such a sea and wind.

There was nothing for him but to remain where he was, in the hope that Ben would come to seek him. But perils now multiplied around him; the wind, and with it the sea, increased continually. The cold became intense; the spray flew into the canoe, which was deeply laden with fish, freezing as it came. It seemed very doubtful to him whether

Hosted by Google

Ben could find him in the darkness, which, as the day drew to a close, became every moment more intense.

"Must I perish, after all," thought the poor boy, "just as I have found a good home and kind friends?" The tears gushing from his eyes froze upon his cold cheeks. He now recollected his mother's last words.

"When trouble comes upon you, my child, call upon God, and he will help you."

Kneeling in the bottom of the boat, he put up a fervent prayer to God for mercy. The flood tide now began to make, which, running against the wind, made a sharp, short sea; the canoe stood, as it were, on end, and it seemed as if every sea must break into her. He was fast giving way to despair, when a large quantity of water came in over the bow. Roused by the instinct that engages us to struggle for life, he threw it out.

"These fish must go overboard to lighten her," said he, and laid his hand on one of the largest, when a faint "Halloo!" came down the wind. His stupor vanished; the blood rushed to his face; uttering a wild cry of joy, he seized the club which he used to kill the fish with, and pounded with all his might upon the head-board of the boat, at the

Hosted by Google

same time shouting loudly. He soon heard distinctly, "Boat, ahoy!" shouted, in the tones of Joe; and in a few moments the great canoe came alongside.

"God bless you, my boy! I was afraid we had lost you," cried Ben, catching him by the shoulder, and lifting him into his lap as though he had been thistle-down. He then wrapped him in a dry coat, and gave him a dry pair of mittens. As they had a compass, they could have hit the land by steering in a northerly direction; but they might have been a great while doing so, without any permanent point of departure to start from. Ben had provided for this. In the first place, they put a good part of the fish into the large canoe; then, taking a large cedar buoy, which he had brought with him for the purpose, he fastened it to the cable of the canoe, and flung it overboard; then he fastened the small canoe to the stern of the large one; thus he had the buoy left for a mark to start from.

"Now, Joe," said Ben, "do you bring that buoy to bear south-south-west, astern, and steer north-north-east, and I'll see if little Ben Rhines can drive these boats through this surf."

Joe sat in the stern, with a steering paddle, and the compass before him on the seat. Charlie stood

Hosted by Google

in the bow of the big canoe, holding the end of the mooring-rope, which confined them both to the buoy. Ben now sat down to his oars, putting his feet against Joe's for a brace.

"Let go, Charlie," cried he, as he dipped the blades in the water, and the boats began to move ahead. The canoe quivered beneath the strokes of the giant, as, warming up, he stretched himself to the work; and as by main strength he forced her through the sharp sea, the water came over the bows in large quantities, but Charlie threw it out as fast as it came.

For a long time no sound was heard but the dash of waves, and the deep breathing of Ben, like the panting of an ox. It was now fast growing dark. At length Joe said, "I believe I see something like the shade of woods."

All was still again for a while, and Ben increased the force of his strokes.

"I see the eagle's nest on the tall pine," said Charlie, "and the point of the Bull."

"That's what I call a good 'land-fall,' when you can't see a thing," said Joe.

They were now soon at the island, where a roaring fire, smoking supper, and joyous welcome awaited the chilled and hungry boy.

Hosted by Google

"O, mother!" said Charlie (as with a cloth dipped in warm water she washed the frozen tears, and the white crust of salt left by the spray, from his cheek, and kissed him), "I didn't think I should ever see you again."

How great a matter sometimes hinges upon a very little thing! Ben and Joe were in the thickest part of the woods, so busily at work getting down a tree that had lodged as not to notice the sudden change in the weather. As soon as they heard the roar of the wind they ran for the beach. On the White Bull was a breastwork of stones that Ben had made, to stand behind and shoot ducks.

"Joe," he cried, "get the range of that canoe over the breastwork, and keep it, while I go and get the compass. When he returned with the compass, Charlie's canoe was entirely hidden by the snow; but as Joe had not moved from the spot, they took the range over the rock, and ran directly upon him. Had it not been for this he would have perished, while they were endeavoring to find him by guess in the snow, for it was pitch dark in an hour after they reached the island.

About eight o'clock the gale came on with tremendous fury; and as Charlie lay in his warm bed

Hosted by Google

that night, and listened to the roar of the surf and the sough of the tempest, he drew the blankets over him, and nestling in their warm folds, lifted up his heart in gratitude to the Being his mother had taught him to call upon in the hour of peril, and not forget in that of deliverance.

When the gale was over, the wind coming to the north, the sea fell, and it was soon smooth, and Charlie wanted to go a-fishing.

"No, Charlie," said Ben, "the weather is too catching; you have fished enough for this fall."

"But I must have my anchor."

"Well, go and get that, and come right back; don't take any bait, nor stop to fish."

Charlie rowed down to the fishing-ground, where he found the buoy floating on the glassy surface of the water, with a great mass of kelp, as large as the floor of the house, fast to it; he took out his knife, and cut them off from the ropes, and watched them as they floated away with the tide.

Charlie thought the southerly wind would come in at twelve o'clock, and save him the labor of rowing home; so he made his canoe fast to the buoy, determined to wait for it. Whether it was due to the reaction consequent upon the terrible excitement he had of late passed through, the beauty of

Hosted by Google

the day, or a mingling of both, he felt deliciously lazy; so, taking his birch-bark dinner-box from the little locker in the stern of the canoe, he stretched himself upon the oars and seats, and with a piece of bread and butter in his fist, began to meditate. "What a strange thing the sea is!" thought he; "three days ago I lay in this very spot, fastened to this very rope, in such an awful sea, expecting to sink every moment, and now it is just as smooth as glass; and where it was breaking feather white against the Bull you might now lie right up to the rocks."

Charlie was very different from John; he was more thoughtful; liked to be studying out and contriving something. John was more for mere excitement and adventure.

The southerly wind now came, and Charlie began to haul in his cable; but he found that the two canoes, riding to it in the gale, had bedded it so well in the sand that he could not start it.

"I'm no notion of working to-day," said he; "contrivance is better than hard work."

It was now flood tide; he pulled the canoe right over her anchor, hauled in the slack of the cable as tight as he could, and made it fast, then stretched out in the sun, and returned to his bread

Hosted by Google

and butter. As the tide made, the cable grew tighter and tighter, till at last it began to draw the bows of the canoe down into the water; at length it drew her down till the water was about to run in, and Charlie began to think the anchor was under a rock, when all at once it gave way with a jump.

"I thought you'd have to come," said he; and, putting up his sail, he went home before the light south-westerly wind.

Ben had said to Charles, when he went away in the morning, "I shall be in the woods when you come back, and I want you to bail out the big canoe, as I shall want to use her to-morrow."

When Charles came to the beach he made his boat fast, and went to look at the big canoe. The sea had broken into her as she lay on the beach, and there was a great deal of water in her.

"This is one of my lazy days, and I'm going to carry it out. I'll be blest if I'll throw all that water out."

He went to where the sea had flung up a vast quantity of kelp in the recent gale, and drew out from the heap the largest one he could find. Perhaps some boy, who has never been on the seashore, might say, "I wonder what kelp is." It is

Hosted by Google

an ocean plant that grows on the deep water rocks. The roots cling to the rock, and send up stalks from ten to fifteen feet in length, with a leaf or apron nearly as long as the stem, a foot wide in the middle, tapering towards each end, and of the color of amber. This stem, which is hollow, and filled with air, causes it to float on the surface of the water, where it is exposed to the sun, without which it could not grow. The hollow in a large stem is about half an inch in diameter. They come to the surface about half tide, and thus are exposed a few hours while the tide is ebbing and flowing.

Charlie cut the large leaf and the root from the kelp, when he had a limber hollow stem five or six feet long. Putting one end into the canoe, and the other into his mouth, he sucked the water through it; then putting the end down on the beach the water continued to run in a steady stream over the side of the canoe. He was contemplating his work with great satisfaction, when, hearing the sound of oars, he looked up, and saw John doubling the eastern point.

It was impossible for Mrs. Rhines to keep John from going to the island alone any longer, since Charles had been off alone, and he was much larger and stronger.

Hosted by Google

"What are you about, Charlie?"

"Making water run up hill."

"But that is running down hill; the beach is lower than the canoe."

"But it runs off over the side of the canoe; come and see."

"So it does, sure enough. What makes it go up over that turn?"

"That's just what I want to know," said Charlie, and I mean to know, too; but I suppose it's the same thing that makes water come up hill in a squirt."

"Why, the plunger in a squirt sucks it up."

"How can it suck it up? it has not any fingers or lips to suck it or lift it; that's only a saying; I don't believe that."

"Well, if you don't believe that, how does it come up? What makes it follow the stick in the squirt?"

"That's what I want to know; there must be some reason. Do you suppose Uncle Isaac knows? he knows most everything."

"No; he don't know such things; but Ben does; he can navigate a vessel, and has been to Massachusetts to school. Father asks Ben when he wants to know things of that kind."

Hosted by Google

"Well, I must ask him."

"I'm sure I don't care what makes it come; I know it does come; that's enough for me. That's a great sail in your boat, Charlie; it's the first time I ever heard of a birch-bark sail: what in the world made you think of making a sail of that?"

"Because I had nothing else; I made one out of basket stuff. I tell you what, these folks that live on islands have to set their wits at work; they haven't a store to run to for everything they want."

"I don't think much of your contrivance to make water run out of a boat; only look at it; you and I could take two pails and bail it out in half the time it will be running out through that, and then we could go and play."

"But we can go and play now, and let it run."

"I never thought of that; let's go then."

"I must ask father first; perhaps he wants me to help him; you go ask him."

John ran to the woods where Ben was at work, and soon came back with liberty for them to play.

"Let's have some fun here with this water; it's real warm and pleasant here in the sun, and we can do lots of things."

"What shall we do?"

Hosted by Google

"Let's make water-works, as they do in England. They carry the water miles and miles."

"What do they carry it in?"

"Lead and iron pipes, and hollow logs; and they have fountains that send the water up in the air, ever so high."

"Let us see how far we can carry water, Charlie."

They had not the least trouble in procuring pipe, as there were cart-loads of kelps on the beach. They went to the heap and drew out the longest and largest stalks they could find, and putting the small end of one into the large end of the other; then made the joints tight with clay, and put them under ground, and covered them up. They did not give up till they carried the water the whole length of the beach into the bay, and then invited Sally to come out and see it.

"Water," said Charles, "will rise as high as the place it came from. I am going to have a fountain."

So he stopped up the end of the pipe with clay, and near the end where the water ran quite fast, he made a little hole, and put into it two or three quills of an eagle, joined together, to make a pipe, and the water spouted through it into the air. As the day was now fast spending, they tore up

Hosted by Google

their pipes, and putting them all into the canoe, and sucking the water through them, set them all running; and when Sally called them to supper the water was nearly all out of the canoe.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER VII.

CHARLIE PLANS A SURPRISE FOR SALLY.

THERE was a certain article of household use that Charles had for a long time been desirous of making for his mother; but he wanted to surprise her with it. This seemed to him almost an impossibility, as she never went from home; but the opportunity now presented itself.

When they were all seated at the supper-table, John said to Ben, "Father sent me over to see if you and Sally would come home to Thanksgiving, — it's Thursday, — and stay over Sabbath, and have a good visit."

"I should like above all things to go," said Sally; "but I don't see how I could leave home so long."

"Yes, you can leave," said Ben; "you haven't stepped off this island since we came on it. It will do you good, and do us all good."

"O, do go, mother," said Charlie, who had his own reasons for wishing to get her out of the house,

Hosted by Google

and was rejoiced at the prospect of accomplishing it; "it will soon be so rough that there will be no getting over, at least for women folks, this winter."

"But who will take care of you?"

"Take care of me! I'll take care of myself, and everything else, too. I can milk, and cook, and see to everything."

"But would you not be afraid to stay here all alone?"

"Afraid! Poor vagabond children, like me, don't have any fears; they can't afford to. It's rich people's children, that are brought up nice, have fears. Such wanderers as I am, if they only have enough to eat, and a place to put their head in, they are all right."

"What a speech that is!" said Joe. "I've always heard that a barrel might have as large a bung-hole as a hogshead, and now I believe it."

"I'll come over and stay with him," said John; "I'm sure I would rather be here than at home."

"Father and mother wouldn't agree to that, John; but you may tell them we'll come and stay over Sabbath."

The next Wednesday morning, to Charles's great delight, they started, and Joe with them, as he was going home to Thanksgiving. The moment they

Hosted by Google

were out of sight, Charlie commenced operations. He went up chamber, where was some clear stuff, — boards and plank, — which now would be worth eighty dollars a thousand, if indeed such lumber could be procured at all, and taking what he needed, brought it down to the bench in the front room. He then went up on the middle ridge, cut down a black cherry tree, and taking a piece from the butt, split it in halves, and brought it into the house. As he now had all his material, he made up a good fire and went to work. His saw and hammer went all the time, except when he was asleep, or doing the necessary work. As for cooking, he lived most of the time on bread and milk, because he did not wish to take the time from his work to cook. He had, indeed, abundance of time to do what he was intending, a regular mechanic would have done in a third part of the time; but Charlie was a boy, and though very ingenious, had to learn as he went along, and stop very often and think a long time how to do a thing; and sometimes he made a mistake and did it wrong, or made a bad joint, and then away it went into the fire.

"If I make a blunder," said Charles, "nobody shall be the wiser for it." Charles was by no means the only apprentice who has spoiled lumber

Hosted by Google

in learning, as the stove in many a joiner's shop would testify, if it could speak.

Ben and Sally had a most delightful time. They staid Wednesday night at Captain Rhines's; Thursday they went to meeting, and Sally saw all her old friends, and the girls she knew before she married, and had to tell over the story about the pirates I don't know how many times.

But there was a little incident that took place at meeting that mortified Ben very much. He entertained a very great respect for religion, and would not for the world have done anything in a light or trifling manner in the house of God. It was the fashion in those days to wear very large watches, and very large seals attached to a large chain. Ben had a watch-seal that was made in Germany, in which was a music-box, that, being wound up, would play several very lively tunes. After being wound up, it was set in operation by pressing a spring. In the morning, before they went to meeting, Ben, in order to gratify John and Fred Williams, who were in to go to meeting with him, had been playing with it, and Uncle Isaac coming in, he left it wound up, and went to meeting. While the minister was at prayer, Ben, in leaning against the pew, pressed the spring, and off started the

Hosted by Google

music-box into a dancing tune. There was no such thing as stopping it till it ran down. It is useless to attempt to describe the effect of such unwarranted and unhallowed sounds breaking upon the solemn stillness of an old-time congregation.

Ben's face was redder than any fire-coal, while his body was in a cold sweat. Sally felt as though she should sink through the floor. Mrs. Rhines looked up to see if the roof was not about to fall and crush them all; while the young people, totally unable to suppress their merriment, tittered audibly. Ben stood it a few moments, and then left the assembly, the seal playing him out.

After stopping a night at the widow's, they went over to Uncle Isaac's, as he declared, unless they spent a night with him, he would never step foot on the island again. He invited John Strout and all the Rhineses to tea. John had a great many inquiries to make of Ben, in respect to Charles, who told him about his being caught in the snow squall.

"He's good grit — ain't he?" said John.

"Yes, John; he's a good, brave, affectionate boy as ever lived; and I love him more and more every day."

"There, Uncle Isaac!" cried John Rhines,

Hosted by Google

"what have I always told you? You'll give up now — won't you?"

"Yes, John; I'll give up. I suppose you feel better now — don't you?"

"Yes, Uncle Isaac, I do feel better; for I never could like anybody as I want to like Charlie, that you had any doubt about. I don't believe in liking at the halves."

Upon their return Charles met them at the shore, delighted to see them, and evidently bursting with some great secret.

"Charles has been doing something special, I know," said Sally; "just look at him."

The boy was hopping and skipping along before them, scarcely able to contain himself.

They went to the end door, which Charles flung open with a great air. Behold, there was a sink under one of the windows. It had a wooden spout that went through the logs out doors, a shelf on top to set the water-pails on, and another long shelf over it on which to keep milk-pans or pails, or any other things, which, being in constant use, it was important to have always at hand. Underneath the sink was a closet, with a door hung on the neatest little wooden hinges that you ever saw, of a reddish color, polished so that they shone, and

Hosted by Google

wooden buttons to close it. In addition to this, he had made a little wooden trough of cherry tree, that would hold about a quart, with a handle on one side, that was made out of the solid wood: this was to keep the soap in that was used about the sink.

Sally screamed outright with joy. "O, how glad I am!" she said, and gave Charlie a kiss, that more than paid him for all his labor. "I shall have such a nice place to keep all my kettles under the sink, and my milk-pails and other things on this long shelf. I can wash my dishes right in the sink, and shan't have to run to the door with every drop of water, and let so much cold in every time I open it. A sink in a log house! O, my! I never thought I should arrive at that. There's not another one in town. If anybody wants to see a sink, they have got to come on to Elm Island. How came you to think of that, you good boy?"

"Why, the people in England have sinks, and I meant you should. There's not a woman in England so good as you are."

Ben stopped up the sink-spout, and turned in two pails of water. He then examined the joints. It didn't leak a drop. After this he turned his attention to the hinges.

Hosted by Google

"What did you make these hinges of, Charles? They are almost as handsome as mahogany."

"Of cherry tree."

"How did you know that cherry tree was a handsome wood?"

"Because I saw a gun-stock John had, that he said was made of it; and he showed me the tree."

"How did you give them such a polish?"

"I rubbed them with dogfish skin, and oiled them."

"Where did you get a dogfish this time of year?"

"Uncle Isaac gave me the skin."

"Where did you get an auger small enough to bore these hinges?"

"I borrowed it of Uncle Isaac."

"How long have you had this in your head?"

"Ever since the time you let me go over to see John. I wanted to do something, and I thought of this."

Ben was highly gratified, not merely with the excellence of the work, but at the evidence it afforded that Charlie had a grateful heart.

Charlie knew very well that Ben's object in sending him over with the fish was not so much for the sake of selling the fish, and obtaining the groceries,

Hosted by Google

as to afford him an opportunity to see John, and do him a kindness; and he longed in some way to repay it.

Sally, in the mean while, had been looking with great curiosity at the table, which was set back close against the wall, evidently covered with dishes that contained something, which, whatever it might be, was concealed by two large table-cloths.

"What is on that table, Charles?" said she.

"My! that's guessing, mother."

He removed the cloth, and there were a chicken-pie, and two apple-pies, and a baked Indian pudding.

"Didn't I tell you I could cook, mother?" said Charlie, greatly delighted at her astonishment.

"Well, Charlie," said Ben, "that is as good a piece of work as any joiner could make. You could not have employed your time better than you have in making that sink. It will be a great help to your mother in doing her work, and a daily convenience and comfort to all of us. There is but one thing it lacks; that is a moulding where the closet joins the sink, to cover the joints, and make a finish."

"Yes, father; I had not time to make that, because I wanted to get dinner, that mother might not come home, and have to go right to cooking the moment she got in the house."

Hosted by Google

"To make it look just right, there should be a bead on the edge, or something of the kind; but I have no tool that it can be done with."

"I have, father; I borrowed one of Uncle Isaac."

"You must have got well into the good graces of Uncle Isaac, for he don't like to lend his tools. But how did you bring these tools, that I have never seen them?"

"You know when I went over to see John, Uncle Isaac sent you a bag of apples."

"Yes."

"Well, I put them in there; and when I came to the shore I hid them in the woods, in a hollow tree, on the western point."

"I know how you feel. I suppose you would not like very much to have anybody see it in an unfinished state, or till you get that moulding on."

"I shouldn't like to have Uncle Isaac or John see it; and I should like to get it all done, if I could, before Joe gets back, because he's a real judge of things, and would be apt to make some queer speech, if it was not finished."

"Well, then, you may finish it to-morrow; and take all the time you want, and make it as nice as you please."

Hosted by Google

"O, thank you, father; I am ever so much obliged to you."

"Come," said Sally, "let us see what this boy's pies and cookery tastes like. O, you rogue! I see now what you was so anxious to get me away from the island for. But what have you lived on, Charlie; I don't see as you have cooked much."

"I couldn't afford the time to cook; so I lived on bread and milk, and bread and butter; but I am going to make it up now."

They had a real social meal, and pronounced Charles's cookery excellent. They also told him all the news, — where they had been, what they had seen, and what John was doing. They said that there was a great quantity of alders in a little swale near the house, almost as large as a man's leg; that they made a real hot fire, and would burn well when they were green; that John was cutting these, and hauling them with his steers, on a sled, for there was snow on the main land, though there had been none to last any time on the island. It was often the case, that, when it was snowing on the main land, it rained upon the island. It also, when it fell, thawed off much sooner, as the sea-water kept the temperature down. Thus, all the snow that came during the storm Charles was

Hosted by Google

caught in, had already disappeared from the island, while on the main John Rhines could haul wood.

As Charles was in a great measure cut off from all society of his own age, he was never happier than when working with tools, seeming to take the greatest delight in making those things that were useful. Ben permitted him to have the stormy days to himself, when he was always at work at the bench, and did not set him to making shingles or staves, except occasionally, in order that he might learn the art; for it is quite an art to shave shingles well and fast. Joe Griffin was the boy for that.

Saturday night brought Joe, and the work in the woods was resumed.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARLIE'S HOME LIFE AND EMPLOYMENTS.

Though every boy, almost, in America knows that baskets are made of ash and oak, it was an entirely new thing to Charles. However, by the instruction of Ben, and the practice of making his sail, he had acquired a knowledge of its properties, and how to pound and prepare it for making baskets. By pounding an ash or oak log the layers of wood may be made to separate, and then the end being started with a knife, they may be run into long, thin strips, suitable for the purpose.

In stormy days he pounded and prepared his material, and in the long winter evenings that were now approaching, he wove it into baskets, as he sat and chatted with the rest before the blazing fire. He made them beautifully, too; some of them open, and others with covers.

"Well, Charlie," said Joe, as he sat watching him, "you are a workman at basket-making, any how."

Hosted by Google

"I ought to be," said he, "for I have worked enough at it; but in our country they don't make them of such stuff as this."

"What do they make them of?"

"Sallies," replied Charles.

"Sallys! they must be a barbarous people to cut women up to make baskets of. What makes them take Sallys? why don't they take Mollys and Bettys, too; it ain't fair to take all of one name."

"It is not women," said Charlie, laughing, "but a kind of wood."

"Is it a tree?"

"It will grow into a small tree; but they cut it every year, and take the sprouts. It grows in rows, just as you raise corn, and just as straight and smooth as a bulrush, without any limbs, only leaves. They peel it, and the leaves all come off with the bark, and leave a smooth, white rod — some of them eight feet long. If they become ever so dry, and you throw them into water, they will become tough as before. If I only had sallies, I could make a basket that would hold water, and the handsomest work-baskets for mother that ever was, and color them if I could get the dye-stuffs. When we make farm-baskets and hampers, we leave the bark on; but when we make nice

Hosted by Google

baskets, we peel it off. We call this whitening them.

"We also strip it into stuff as thin as a shaving, to wind round the handles of nice baskets and fancy things, and call it skein work, because this thin stuff is made up into skeins, for use like yarn."

"What does it look like?" said Ben.

"It has a long, narrow leaf of bluish green; and in the spring, before anything else starts, it has a white stuff on it like cotton-wool; we call it palm; and on Palm Sunday the people carry it to church; and if you put a piece of it on the ground, in a wet place, it will take root."

"I know what it is. It's what we call pussy-willow and dog-willow, but I never thought it was tough enough to make baskets; besides, it grows crooked and scrubby."

"Perhaps it is not like ours; but ours would not grow straight except they were cut off. A sprout is different from a branch. Does the willow, as you call it, grow on the island?"

"Yes; down by the brook and the swamp."

"Tell us something about the folks in the old country," said Joe. "What else did your father do besides make baskets? Did he own any land?"

"Nobody owns any land in England but the

Hosted by Google

quality and the rich esquires. Poor people don't own anything; not even their souls, — leastways, that is what my grandfather used to say, — for they had to ask some great man what they ought to think. My father was a tenant of the Earl of Bedford. My grandfather once lived by the coal mines at Dudley, in Staffordshire. It was named after Lord Dudley Ward, who owned extensive iron mines. Occasionally he came to visit his property, with carriages, and servants, and livery, and a great parade. On holidays he sometimes gave them beef and ale. These poor, simple miners thought he was more than a man. One day when he was riding by, the horses prancing, the people cheering, and the footmen in their red suits, a little boy was looking on with amazement. At length he said to his father, 'Fayther, if God Almighty dies, who'll be God Almighty then?' 'Why, Lord Dudley Ward, you foo'.'"

"Jerusalem!" said Joe Griffin; "I did not think there were any people in this world so ignorant as that. They don't know so much as a yellow dog. Were the people where you lived so ignorant?"

"No; they were Wesleyan Methodists, and their children were taught to read and write. It is in

Hosted by Google

the mines where the greatest ignorance is. We lived in the fens."

"What is the fens?"

"What we call the fens is the greater part of it low, flat land, which has some time been under water; but the water has been drained off by canals and ditches, and pumped out with windmills, and now the most of it bears the greatest crops of any land in England. But there are some places so low that they could not be drained.

"Such was the place where we lived, which was so wet that nothing could grow but sallies and alders. No cattle could be kept; so the people keep geese and ducks instead. The geese and ducks are their cattle."

"But geese and ducks won't give milk," said Joe.

"Well, some of them make out to keep a cow, and others a goat or two; and the others get their milk where they can, or go without."

"What do these people do for a living?"

"They are basket-makers and coopers. Alders grow taller and straighter there than they do here; and they make baskets of the sallies, and hoops both of the sallies and alders.

"The fens are full of frogs, and bugs, and worms, and the fowl get their living. We had hundreds

Hosted by Google

of geese and ducks, and picked them three or four times a year. But the folks are poor there — them that are poor. We hardly ever saw any meat from year's end to year's end."

"Couldn't you eat your geese?"

"Eat our geese! No, indeed; they had to be sold to pay the rent."

"Rent for living in a quagmire! I should think you ought to be paid for living there."

"Rent! yes; and high rent, too. Why, there's tallow enough in that candle on the table to last a fen cottager three weeks."

"I don't see why a candle shouldn't burn out as fast in England as here."

"They would make that candle into ever so many rush-lights."

"What's a rush-light?"

"They take a bulrush, and take the skin off from each side down to the white pith, leaving a little strip of skin on the edge to stiffen it, and make it stand up, — that is for a wick; then they dip it a few times in melted tallow, and make a light of it; but it's a little, miserable light."

"I shouldn't think they could see to read by it."

"There's but very few of them can read. They don't have schools, as they do here; and the poor

Hosted by Google

people can't send their children, for so soon as a child is big enough to open a gate, or turn a wheel, or mind another child, run of errands, hold a horse, or scare the rooks and the birds from the grain, they are obliged to put that child to work, in order to live and pay rent.

"Women in England spin twine and make lines with a large wheel, which a little boy turns; and when the little boy gets tired, the woman sings to him, to cheer him up, —

'Twelve o'clock by the weaver's watch,
The setting of the sun;
Heave away, my little boy,
And you'll leave off when you're done.

And the little boy will brighten up, and make the wheel fly, because he's going to leave off when he's done."

"You are a little boy, Charlie," said Sally, who was listening with great attention, "to know so much about the affairs of older people."

"Ah, mother, misery makes boys sharp to learn. If you was a little boy, and your mother had but one cow, and she churned, and you asked her for a little piece of butter, and she said, with the tear in her eye, 'No, my child, it must go to pay the rent;'

Hosted by Google

if you brought in a whole hat full of eggs, and had not eaten an egg for a year, and should long for one, O, so much, and cry, and say, 'O, mother, do give me just one egg!' and she said, 'No, my child, they must all be sold, for we are behindhand with the rent;' you would know what paying rent means."

"Well, Charlie, you shall have all the butter you want every time I churn; and I'll spread your bread both sides, and on the edges."

"I shouldn't think," said Joe, "a man could get a living by basket-making. It can't be much of a trade. Anybody can make a basket that has got any Indian suet. I can make as good a basket as anybody."

"You can make a corn-basket or a clam-basket; but the basket-makers make chairs, and cradles, and carriages, and fishing-creels, and work-stands. It is as much of a trade as a joiner's or a shoemaker's. There is more call for basket-work in England than here. Timber is very scarce there. They would no more think of cutting down such a young, thrifty ash as that I am making this basket of, than they would of cutting a man's head of; and, when they cut down a tree, they dig up every bit of the root, and use it for something, and then plant

Hosted by Google

another one. They don't have boxes, and barrels, and troughs to keep and carry things in, as they do here; but it is all crates, and hampers, and baskets, and sacks. If a man should cut a tree as big as a hoe-handle on the Earl of Bedford's estates, he would be transported or hung."

"It wouldn't be a very safe place for me to go," said Joe, "for I've the blood of a great many trees on my conscience."

"They raise trees there from the seed, and plant and set out thousands of acres. O, I wish you could only be in the fens in picking-time, I guess you would laugh."

"Why so, Charlie?"

"You see the women and children take care of the fowl. When they want to pick them, they put on the awfulest-looking old gowns, and tie cloths round their heads, and shut the geese and ducks up in a room, and then take 'em in their arms and go to pulling the feathers out. The old ganders will bite, and thrash with their wings; they will be plastered from head to foot with feathers.

"An old woman, with her black face all tanned up (for the women work in the fields there), looks so funny peeping out of a great heap of white feathers and down! and then such an awful squawk-

Hosted by Google

ing as so many fowl make! Don't you have any lords and dukes here, father?"

"No; we are all lords and dukes. We have presidents, and governors, and folks to do our thinking for us; and if they don't think and govern to suit us, we pay them off, turn them out, and hire better ones."

"Who is your landlord, father?"

"Mr. Welch, in Boston, till I pay him for this island."

"Who is Uncle Isaac's, and Captain Rhines's, and the rest of the folks round here?"

"They are their own landlords." He then explained to the wondering boy how it was that people in America got along, and governed themselves without any nobility or landlords, and owned their land; that he was now paying for his, that he might own it, and that was the reason he came on to the island. He also told him, that in some parts of the country land was given to people for settling on it.

"What! is it their ointy-dointy, forever and ever?"

"Yes; as long as they live; and then they can sell it or leave it to their children, or give it to whom they have a mind to."

Hosted by Google

"O," cried Charlie, jumping up, and reddening with excitement, "how my poor father and mother would have worked, if they could have thought they could ever have come to own land for themselves! According to that, all that the people here do on the land they do for themselves, and they are their own landlords."

"To be sure they are."

"Only think, to own your land, and have no rent to pay! I should think it was just the country for poor people to live in."

"We think it is."

"I'm glad you told me all these things, father. I mean to do all I can to help you and mother pay for the land, and by and by, perhaps, when I get to be a man, I can have a piece of land."

"I'll tell you what you can do, Charles. Make baskets in the evenings and rainy days, and sell them. I will let you have all you get for them."

"I thank you, father. I could make the house full before spring."

"I," said Joe, "when I am not too tired, will pound some of the basket-stuff for you. It is hard work for a boy like you."

"So will I," said Ben. "I can pound enough in one evening to last you a month."

Hosted by Google

"Yes," said Joe; "you and John might form a company, and go into the basket business — Rhines & Bell. No; the Rhines Brothers; John and you are brothers. John could pound the basket-stuff at home, and bring it over here; you could make them, and he could sell them to the fishermen in the summer. They use lots of baskets. If you sell them to the store you won't get any money, only goods; but the fishermen will pay the cash."

"Won't that be nice! I tell you the very first thing I mean to have; I'll swap some baskets at the store, and get some cloth to make a sail for my boat."

"I'll cut it for you," said Joe.

"I'll sew it," said Sally.

"And I," said Ben, "will rope it for you (sew a piece of rope around the edge), and show you how to make the grummet-holes."

"Then the next thing I'll do, will be to get some powder, and, when the birds come in the spring, I will learn to shoot and kill them, and have feathers to sell, to help pay for the island."

"If," said Joe, "you don't learn to shoot till the birds come, by the time you get learned the thickest of them will all be gone. You ought to fire at

Hosted by Google

a mark this winter, and practise, and then when the birds come you will not have so much to do."

"I can't get any powder till I sell my baskets; powder and shot cost a good deal."

"I'll advance you the money, so that you can get a little powder and shot. You can use peas and little stones part of the time: they will go wild, but it will help you to get used to hearing a gun go off, and learning to take sight, and hold her steady. Our folks will want some baskets in the spring, and when I get through I will take them; but I will let you have the money now."

"Thank you a thousand times! What a good country this is, and how good everybody is!" said the happy boy. "Everybody seems to want to help me; it ain't so in England."

"That is because you are a good boy, and try to help yourself and others."

"There's one other thing I must have, because I want it to make baskets — that is a knife."

"To be sure; a boy without a knife is no boy at all; he's like a woman without a tongue."

"Then I'll have some bits, and a bit-stock, and a fine-toothed saw. O, if I only had the tools, wouldn't I make things for mother! I'd make a front door, and ceil up the kitchen, and cover up

Hosted by Google

the chimney, and make a closet, and a mantel-piece, and finish off a bedroom for father and mother, and shingle the roof."

At this they all burst into peals of laughter.

"Well, Charlie," said Ben, "you've laid out work enough for five or six years. You had better go to bed now, and all the rest of us, for it is past ten o'clock. I am sure I don't know where this evening has gone to."

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER IX.

BEN FINDS A PRIZE.

THE next morning Charles went to look at the willows. He said they were different from the sallies they made baskets of; that the same kind grew in England, but they called them wild sallies there, and never made baskets of them; but he thought if they could be made to grow straight he could make a basket of them. So he got the axe, and cut off a whole parcel of them, in order that they might sprout up the next spring and grow straight.

Intercourse with the main shore was so difficult and dangerous in the winter, as there was nothing better to go in than a canoe, that Ben went off to procure provisions and breadstuff to last him till spring. When he returned he brought Charles powder and shot.

"Father," said Charles, "you never got all this powder and shot with the money I gave you."

"No, Charles; I put a little to it, because I wanted to make my little boy a present."

Hosted by Google

"Thank you, father."

"John told me that he would like very much to go into the basket business with you, and would pound a lot of basket-stuff, and make it all of a width, and trim the edges smooth and handsome, and get out the rims and handles. He wants to know if you are willing to take Fred Williams into partnership with you and him, because he wants to go in. His father is a miller, and he can sell a good many baskets to folks that come to the mill. Nova Scotia people often come there after corn, and he could sell them to them, to sell again to the fishermen down their way."

"Yes, father; I should like first rate to have him."

"John Strout is going to the West Indies this winter, and will bring the Perseverance over here, and leave her, because she'll be safe. John will send basket-stuff over by him, and you can send back word whether you will take Williams into partnership."

"I don't know what would have become of me, if you and mother had not taken me in. Now, John told me all about Fred. He said that he didn't want him to go with him and Uncle Isaac, because he knew that they should have so much better time together; but he said one day, when

Hosted by Google

they were off together in a boat, Uncle Isaac told him that we ought to deny ourselves to help others, and talked to him in such a way that he felt ashamed of himself, and couldn't look Uncle Isaac in the face, but had to look right down in the bottom of the boat. Since that he had gone with Fred, and was right glad of it, for he had become a real good boy, and he's as smart as lightning. I saw that the day I was over to see John."

"He has become a first-rate boy. Everybody that goes to the mill says there is not a better, more obliging boy in town; and they are always glad when he is in the mill, his father is so cross."

"You know I would rather be with John alone; but if he made a sacrifice to get him good, I ought to help keep him good."

"That's right, Charlie; that is a good principle."

"Do you know, father, it seems to me just like this about Fred. When I get out an ash rim for a basket, it is hard work to bend it; and if, after I have bent it, I don't fasten it, but throw it down on the floor and leave it, in the morning it will be straightened out just where it was before; but if I fasten it till it gets dry and set, it will stay so; and I think we ought to do all we can to keep Fred

Hosted by Google

good till he gets fairly set in good ways, and then he'll stay set."

Ben had scarcely removed the provisions from the canoe, and put it all under cover, when the weather suddenly changed. As night came on, the wind increased, with snow; and afterwards hauling to the south-east, blew a hurricane, the rain falling in torrents through the night; but at daylight hauled to the south-west, when it became fair.

Ben and Joe were at work in the front room making shingles. At morning high-water they heard a constant thumping in the direction of the White Bull for more than an hour, when it gradually ceased. At night they heard it again.

"Joe," said Ben, "let us take the canoe after supper, and go over and see what that thumping is. It is not the surf, nor rocks grinding on each other, I know."

When they reached the spot they found the bowsprit of a vessel, with the bobstays hanging to it, having been broken off at the gammoning, with the gripe attached to it. There was also the foremast and fore-topmast, with the yards and headstays, the mast being carried away at the deck. The chain-plates also on the starboard side and channels had been torn out, and hung to the

Hosted by Google

shrouds by the lanyards. On the port side there were only the shrouds and the upper dead-eyes. The sails were on the yards, while braces, clew-garnets, clew-lines, leach-lines, bunt-lines, and reef-tackles, — some nearly of their entire length, others cut and parted, — were rolled around the spars, and matted with kelps and eel-grass, in almost inextricable confusion. In the fore-top was a chest lashed fast, and filled with studding-sail gear, which having been fastened, the rigging remained in it. These ropes were very long, and had been but little worn.

"Well," said Ben, looking upon the mass with that peculiar interest that a wreck always inspires in the heart of a seaman, "I am sorry for the poor fellows who have met with a misfortune; but this rigging, these sails and iron-work, are a most precious God-send to me."

Iron and cordage were both very valuable articles in the country at that time, as the British government had forbidden the erection of rolling and slitting mills before the Revolution, and the manufactures of the country were just struggling into life. Withes of wood were used in lieu of ropes and chains.

"The long bolts in that gripe," said Joe, "will

Hosted by Google

make you a crane. A few more links put to the chain on that bobstay will make you a first-rate draught chain. The straps of the dead-eyes welded together, and a little steel put on the point, will make a good crowbar."

But Ben had ideas, which he did not make known to Joe, very different from the construction of cranes or crowbars. These it were which occasioned his joy at the sight of the wreck.

"These are the spars of a big ship," said Ben; "neither the sea nor the wind took these sticks out of her."

"How do you know that?"

"Because, if the ship had gone ashore, and gone to pieces, the spars and this gripe would have gone where she did. She never lost that mast by the wind. If she had, the chain-plates wouldn't be hanging to the shrouds, for no rigging would hold to tear the channels from a ship's side."

"No more it wouldn't. I never thought of that; but how did she lose it?"

"She has run full splinter on to an iceberg, and struck it with her starboard bow. An iceberg would scrub her chain off as easy as you would pull a mitten off your hand."

"Then she went down with all hands."

Hosted by Google

"Perhaps not. I've seen a vessel keep up, and get into port, that had her stem cut off within four inches of the hood ends. Look there," pointing to the larboard shrouds of the fore-rigging; on the dead-eyes and the shrouds were the marks of an axe. "Somebody did that in cutting the lanyard to let the spars go clear of the ship. They would not have done that if she had been going down."

They built a shed of boards to put the rigging and sails under, and yards, while Charles burnt the mast, bowsprit, and caps to get the iron.

Snow having now fallen, they began to haul their spars and logs to the beach. John Strout now came over and brought the basket-stuff, and Charles sent word by him to John that he would like to take Fred Williams into partnership.

John brought word that Fred's father was going to repair the mill, and that while that was going on, Fred would like to come over and see Charles, and learn to make baskets. Charles sent word back that it would be agreeable to him to have him come. He was now quite excited. Here was company coming, and nowhere for them to sleep but on the floor. There were but two bedsteads in the house, — one in the kitchen, where Ben and his wife slept, and the other in the front room, where

Hosted by Google

Joe slept. This was the spare bed, and the best room, though it was made a workshop of, and was half full of shingles and staves; but they could do no better.

Charlie, as usual, went to Sally for counsel.

"I should not care for him," said she; "I should as lief he would sleep on the floor as not. If you give him as good as you have yourself, that is good enough."

"But, mother, I shouldn't want him to go home and say that he came to see me, and had to sleep on the floor; besides, John might hear of it, and then he wouldn't like to come."

"John! he'd sleep on the door-steps, or a brush-heap, and think it was beautiful. I'll tell you; I'll ask Joe to sleep in your bed, and let you and Fred have the front room."

"O, no, mother! I'm afraid he won't like it; and then he will play some trick on us. I have thought of a plan, mother."

"Let us hear it."

"There are some yellow-birch joist up chamber, all curly, with real handsome whorls in them. I think I could make a bedstead of them; and then, you know, it would be my own, and we should have it if any company came. I have got an auger

Hosted by Google

that I borrowed of Uncle Isaac, to bore the holes for the cord, and the earings on the sails that came ashore would make a nice cord."

"I would, Charlie; that will be a first-rate plan."

"But I don't like to ask father for the wood. He has saved it to make something, and perhaps I might spoil it, and not make a bedstead after all."

"Ask him yourself. I'll risk your spoiling the stuff. If you do, there's plenty more where that came from."

Charlie asked for and obtained the joist. As he didn't want Joe to look at and criticise him, when he saw him coming from the woods to his meals, he put it up chamber. At length he finished making it. Then he scraped it with a scraper made of a piece of saw-plate, and then rubbed it with dogfish skin, which made all the curls and veins in the wood to show, and put it in the front room for Ben and Joe to see when they came in to dinner.

"If I only had," said Charles, "some dye-stuff, how handsome I could make this look!"

Joe told him there was a little red ochre in the schooner, which he would get for him. This Charles mixed with vinegar, and rubbed a little on

Hosted by Google

the wood, which brought out the beauty of the wood, and gave it a nice color."

"If I were you, Charlie," said Ben, "I would have a sacking bottom to your bed, instead of bare cords."

"What is that?"

"Why, there is a piece of canvas that was torn from one of the sails, take that, and make it almost large enough to fill up the bedstead; then hem it, and make a row of eyelet-holes all around the edges, and cord it tight into the bedstead. It will be first rate to sleep on."

"Ben, shew Charles how to sew with a sailor's thimble, which is held in the hollow of the hand;" and he made it and put it in.

Fred now came over, and Charles taught him to set up and make a basket. He made a good many, and burnt them up in the fire, till at length he made one that would do. After this he got along very well.

The two boys now began to fire at a mark, as Fred had brought some powder and shot, and a gun with him. Charles, at first, shut up both eyes when he fired, and almost dropped the gun when it went off, and was afraid it would kick; and Fred could show him as much about shooting as he could

Hosted by Google

Fred about basket-making; but he soon got so that he could fire without winking, and hold the gun firm to his shoulder, and hit a mark quite well. Then they took a block of wood, and made it in the shape of a Whistler, and anchored it in the water, and fired at that, as it was bobbing up and down in the water; and at length Charles got so he could hit that twice out of four times. When they had expended their ammunition, they took, instead of shot, peas and gravel-stones.

One day, after dinner, Charles came running into the house all out of breath, saying there was a little child in the woods.

"How do you know?" said Ben.

"I have seen its tracks and its bare foot-prints in the snow. O, father! do come and help me find it; it will freeze to death."

"It is not a child's track, Charles."

"What is it?"

"It is a raccoon track thawed out; they look like a child's track."

"What is a raccoon, father?"

"They are about twice as large as sailor, and live in the woods on mice, fish, and berries. I will show you one some day."

"May I shoot him; me and Fred?"

Hosted by Google

"No; I want them to breed."

They now began to take what Charles called real solid comfort. The days were short; as Ben said, only two ends to them. They had abundance of time to sleep, and were all in full health and vigor.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER X.

HOW THEY PASSED THE WINTER EVENINGS.

One evening they made a rousing fire. Ben got out his shoemaker's bench, and was tapping a pair of shoes. Boots were not worn by them; they wore shoes and buskins.

Fred and Charles were making baskets, and Joe an axe-handle, or rather smoothing it. Sally was knitting Charles a pair of mittens. As for Sailor, he had the cat on her back on the hearth, while he was astride of her, trying to lick her face with his tongue, the cat keeping him off with her paws, but when he became too familiar, would strike him with her claws.

"Charlie," said Joe, looking up from his work, "tell us some more about England, like as you did the other night."

"Yes, do, Charlie," said Fred. "Was your father a cooper? You said they made hoops of willow and alder."

"No; he was a basket-maker, and so were all

Hosted by Google

my folks — my grandfather and great-grandfather. We cannot remember when our folks were not basket-makers. But then, as I have told you, we mean by basket-makers those who work with sallies, and make all kinds of things with it. My mother's brother made a tea-set, and presented it to the queen, — plates, and cups and saucers, and tea and coffee pots, and tumblers. Of course they were only to look at; but they were just as beautiful as they could be, and all colored different colors, like china. He was four years about it, at spare times, when he could leave his regular work that he got his living by. My father employed four or five men, and we paid our rent, and got along quite comfortable, till my father was pressed."

"Pressed!" said Fred; "what is that?"

"Why, in England, they are in war-time always short of men in the navy; and then they take them right in the street, or anywhere, and put them by force into the men-of-war, to serve during his majesty's pleasure. I have heard people say that means during the war; and that as England is always at war with somebody, it was the same as forever. That is what pressing means."

"A cruel, barbarous thing it is, too," said Ben, "and ought to bring a curse on any government."

Hosted by Google

"They press sailors generally," said Charles; but when they are very short of men they will take anybody they can get hold of. I have heard say they couldn't press a squire's son, or a man that owned land, and that they can't go into a man's house to take him; but, if they catch him outside, or going into the door, they will take him."

"Can they take any of the quality?"

"No, indeed! all the misery comes on the poor in England."

"I shouldn't think," said Fred, "that a poor man would dare to go out of doors."

"Well, they don't; leastways, in the night, when the press-gang is about. There was one time (I have heard my mother tell of it) when they were pressing blacksmiths."

"What did they want of blacksmiths?"

"She said at that time they took blacksmiths and rope-makers, calkers, and shipwrights, and set them at work in the dock-yards on foreign stations, where they were building and repairing men-of-war. My uncle was a blacksmith; he had been warned that the press-gang were about, and was on his guard. But one night, just as he was getting into bed, there was a cry of murder right at his door-step. He ran out to help, and there was a man

Hosted by Google

lying on the flags, and two others striking at him. The moment my uncle came out, the man who was crying murder jumped up, and all three of them rushed upon my uncle. It was the press-gang making believe murder to get him out of doors. He caught hold of the scraper on the step of the door, and cried for help. My aunt ran out and beat the press-gang with her broom, and the people in the block flung coals, and kettles, and anything they could lay their hands on, upon their heads. One woman got a tea-kettle of hot water, and was going to scald the press-gang; but she couldn't without scalding my uncle. The people now rose, and came rushing from all quarters; but the police came, too, to help the press, and marines from the guard-house with cutlasses and pistols. His wife clung to him, and his children, and cried as though their hearts would break; but they put handcuffs on him, and dragged him away, all bleeding, and his clothes torn off in the scuffle."

"What a bloody shame!" cried Ben, his face assuming that terrible expression which Charles had seen on it when the encounter between him and the land-pirates took place. "I wish I had been there; I'd have given some of them sore heads. But they are not so much to blame, after

Hosted by Google

all. It is those that make the laws, and that set the press-gang at work. I should like to wring their necks for them."

"I shouldn't think," said Joe, "such men would fight very well for the government that used them so."

"They don't," said Ben; "and they dare not trust them; but they scatter them through the ship, a few in every mess, and put them where they can watch them. I was taken once by an English man-of-war. They put a prize crew on board of us; part of them were pressed men. We rose and retook her; the pressed men all joined us, and went into our army."

"I should have thought they would have gone into the privateers or men-of-war."

"They thought they were less likely to be taken again in the army, for if the English had got hold of them, they would have hung them. They told me that whenever they got into action with a French vessel, they threw the shot overboard, if they could get a chance, instead of putting it in the guns, in order that they might be taken; and that they sometimes revenged themselves by shooting their officers in the smoke and heat of the action."

Hosted by Google

"I should think the officers would keep a bright look out for them."

"So they do; and are very careful not to go under the tops, and keep well clear of the masts, lest a marline-spike should come down on their heads, or a block unhook, or a heaver fall, as accidents of that kind were very apt to happen when pressed men were aloft. I don't believe a man could be so on his guard that I could not kill him in the course of a three years' cruise, if I wanted to, and appear to do it by accident, too.

"I have seen hundreds of these men, and they all tell the same story. I've seen a poor fellow who was pressed when he was nineteen; his mother was a widow, and he was her sole dependence. I've seen him, when he was telling me the story, jump up and smite his hands together, while the tears ran down his cheeks, and pray God to curse that government, and hope that he might live to see its downfall; but I never heard them curse the country; they seemed to love that; it was the government they hated and cursed."

"Was your father pressed when your uncle was?" said Joe.

"No; about four months after."

"Tell us about that, Charles," said Sally.

Hosted by Google

"I don't like to tell or think about it; but I will tell you. At the time my uncle was taken, it made a great noise. People were very much frightened, and kept very close, never going out in the evening if they could help it."

"I don't see," said Ben, "in a country where the law allowed them to seize people in the street, and carry them off, why they could not go into the house and take them."

"Perhaps they could; but that was what folks said, that an 'Englishman's house was his castle,' and they couldn't come into the house to take them, and they never did. We didn't think they would press my father, because he was neither a rope-maker nor carpenter; but they were short of men, and all was fish that came to their net. Nevertheless, we kept such strict watch that my father would not have been taken; but he was sold to them by a blood-seller."

"What is a blood-seller?" said Sally.

"A man that will go to the captain of the press-gang, and tell him where he can find a man, and how he can get hold of him; and they get paid for it."

"O, that is the meanest, wickedest thing I ever did hear tell of."

Hosted by Google

"It is often done in England, though; but this man didn't do it for money."

"What did he do it for?"

"He and my father courted mother when they were both young men; but she liked my father best, and married him. He always hated my father after that; told lies about him, killed his geese, and tried to injure him in his business. But when he found the press-gang were about, he thought if he could sell him to them, and get him out of the way, mother would marry him."

"He must have been a fool, as well as a villain, to think a woman would marry a man that did that."

"But he did not think that would ever be known; but it came out. He knew that my father had engaged to make cases for the army to carry instruments in."

"What are they?"

"Why, little square baskets, with partings in them, and covered with leather, to put the doctors' things in. They are so light that a man can carry them on his back just like a knapsack.

"My father set out from home, to go to the government workshop, long before daylight, that the press-gang might not see him; he had about four miles to go. If he could only get there, and put

Hosted by Google

his name on the roll, he would be safe, as then he would have a passport given him to go and come, and the press couldn't touch him. He could make better wages working at home, but my mother persuaded him to work for less wages, for the sake of being safe.

"The blood-seller knew all about this, and told the press-gang. He was in sight of the workshop, and hurrying on with all his might, when four men jumped out from a hedge and seized him, — one of whom put his hand on his shoulder, and told him he must go and serve in the navy during his majesty's pleasure. Before daylight he was out of sight and hearing of everybody that knew him."

"Poor man," said Sally, "when he was almost in safety."

"But how did you know what had become of him?" said Joe.

"He was going to board with his cousin, and come home Saturday nights. They looked for him till the middle of the week, and, when he didn't come, his cousin came over to our house, and said to mother, 'Where is John? I thought he was going to work for the army.'

"'He went from here at three o'clock last Monday morning.'

Hosted by Google

"'He has not been at our house, nor at the workshop, for I have been to see.'

"'Not been at your house! Why, he told me he was going to enter his name on the roll, and be mustered in, and get his protection, and then go to your house to dinner.'

"'My God! then the press-gang have got him!'

"As he uttered these awful words, my mother screamed out, 'The thing that I greatly feared has come upon me,' and fell senseless on the hearth. We children thought she was dead."

"Poor soul," cried Sally, "how she must have suffered! Your cousin ought to have broke it to her more gently. But what did you do then?"

"He put her on the bed, and called some women that lived over the way, and they brought her to. All her folks and friends came to see her, and tried to comfort her, and told her that perhaps he had gone on some unexpected business, and would return; and that even if he was pressed, he might be discharged when the war was over."

"How long before you found out what become of him?"

"In about ten days my mother had a letter from him. It was all blotted over with tears. He said he was on board the hulk at Sheerness, and that if

Hosted by Google

we came quick we could see him, as he might be ordered away at any time."

"What is a hulk?" said Fred.

"It is an old man-of-war, not fit for service, and made a prison-ship of, to keep the men in till they want them in the ships they are going in. My grandfather went with us to the ship; there we found him with two thousand more men."

"O, my!" said Sally; "were all these poor men pressed?"

"No; my father said most of them were sailors who had shipped of their own accord. He was so pale and heart-broken I should have hardly known him. He wanted to be cheerful, and comfort us, but he couldn't. The tears ran down his cheeks in spite of him.

"He took my mother in his arms, and said, 'My poor Nancy, what will become of you and these little ones, now they have no father to earn them bread, and keep want from the door; and poor old father, too, that when we had food always had part of it.' Little William, who was just beginning to go alone, clung around his neck, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

"'We shall be at home, John, among friends; but you are going among strangers into battle, to be exposed to the dangers of the seas.'

Hosted by Google

"They now told us we must part, for we had been together two hours, though it seemed to us but a few moments. We had to see and talk with him right amongst a crowd of men: some were swearing, some wrangling, and some laughing and talking, for the sailors seemed to be as merry as could be, and in their rough way tried to cheer us up. Father asked my grandfather to pray with him before they parted; and when my father told some of the sailors what he was going to do, they went among the rest, and it was so still that you might have heard a pin drop. I saw tears in the eyes of many of them when we went away, and they said, 'God bless you, old father!' in a real hearty way, to my grandfather, and shook hands with him."

"Sailors are rough men," said Ben, "for they live on a rough element, and see rough usage; but there was not a sailor in all that ship's company would have betrayed his shipmate, as that blood-seller did your father."

"While we were on board the guard-ship, one of the marines told my father who it was that betrayed him to the press-gang, for he overheard him talking with the captain about it.

"It was bitter parting. We never expected to

Hosted by Google

see him again, and we never did; for it was but a few months after that when he was killed in battle."

"What did your mother do," said Ben, "when she heard that your father was dead?"

"At first she took to her bed, and seemed quite heart-broken. After a while she kind of revived up, and said it was her duty to take care of us, for father's sake. Then she hired men, and went into the shop herself; and the neighbors and our relations helped us cut and whiten the sallies, and pick the fowl, and we made out to pay the rent, and were getting along very well, when there came a new trouble."

"What was that?"

"Why, this same man, Robert Rankins, that sold my father, began to come into the shop, and make us presents, and help us, and finally asked my mother to marry him; but she spit in his face, and called him a blood-seller, and told him what he had done to my father; but still he would come; when, to be rid of him, she put the children among my father's folks, and took me and came to the States; and the rest you know," said the boy, his voice shaking with the feelings which the recital called up.

Hosted by Google

Charlie's stories were not all so sad as these. Many of them caused them all to laugh till their sides ached.

"How did you get your living, Charles," said Ben, "before you shipped with the pirates in the shaving mill?"

"I ran of errands, and piled up wood on the wharves, picked up old junk round the wharves and sold it, and went round to the doors of the houses and sung songs; did everything and anything that I could get a copper by, except to beg and steal. I never did beg in my life, but sometimes I thought I must come to it or starve."

"Sing me a song, do, Charlie," said Fred.

"Some other time, Fred, I will; but not to-night. I have been talking about things that make my heart ache, and I don't feel like it."

If Charles could tell them many things that were new and interesting, they could equal him in all these respects. Joe could tell him stories of logging, camp-life in the woods, and hunting; Ben, of the seas and privateering.

Charlie was exceedingly curious and inquisitive in respect to everything that related to the Indians. He had read and heard a great many stories about them in his own country, from old

Hosted by Google

soldiers that had been in the British armies, and of whom every village and hamlet had its share, and who had fought in all the Old French and Indian wars; but he had never seen a savage, or any of their work.

"They are the fellows for making baskets," said Joe, "and they can color them too." Then he told him about their canoes of birch bark.

Ben showed him a pair of snow-shoes, and put them on, and a pair of moccasons worked with beads.

Sally showed him a box made of birch wood, covered with bark, and worked with porcupine quills of different colors — blue, white, and green.

"Where did they get the colors?" said Charles.

"Out of roots and barks, that no one knows but themselves."

"What color are they?" said Charles.

"Just the color of that," said Joe, taking a copper coin from his pocket.

But he was the most of all delighted when he discovered that Uncle Isaac had lived among them, and knew all their ways, and promised himself that he would have many a good time talking with him.

"You must get the right side of Uncle Isaac if you want Indian stories," said Joe.

Hosted by Google

"I guess he has done that already," replied Ben, "or he never would have lent him his tools. Uncle Isaac don't lend his tools to everybody. If you only knew the secret of the Indian colors, Charles, you might make your bedstead look gay."

"Yes, father, and not cost a penny either. I would color the sacking bottom green; no, red; no, blue, I think, would look the handsomest."

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XI.

BEN REVEALS HIS LONG-CHERISHED PLAN TO HIS FATHER.

The spring was now approaching. Ben had a large amount of lumber cut; but, as the spars had been pretty well culled out before, much the greater proportion of it was logs, fit only for boards. He might have cut more spars, but he did not mean to clear any more of the island than was needed for pasture and tillage, if he could possibly avoid it.

He had already realized a good deal of money by running some risk, when he took his spars to Boston, and saved nearly all the expense of transportation. But he now had determined upon a still more adventurous plan, which he had been revolving in his mind, and preparing for all the previous summer, and during the winter.

This was no less than to take his boards to the West Indies in a raft, or rather to make them carry themselves. For this reason he had brought his boards back from the mill, and stuck them up to

Hosted by Google

dry, instead of selling them there, as he might have done. It was for this reason that he cut the cedar, and piled it up to dry, that it might be as light as possible.

But to encounter the tremendous seas of the Gulf Stream, and keep such an enormous body of timber together in a sea way, was quite a different matter from going to Boston on a raft. Still the gain was in proportion to the risk.

"If," reasoned Ben, "men can go thirty miles up the rivers, cut logs, raft them down, manufacture them into boards, take them to Portland, Boston, or Wiscasset, sell them to another party, pay wharfage, pay for handling them over two or three times, freight them to the West Indies, and then make money, how much could a man make who cut them at his own door, made them into boards at a tithe of the expense, transported them at a trifling expense compared with the others, and sold them in the same market!"

Ben did not lack for mechanical ability and contrivance, and was equal to any emergency. He believed he had devised a plan to hold the timber together, and put it into a shape to be transported.

But another and more embarrassing question was, who would go as captain of the strange craft? He

Hosted by Google

could think of no one who possessed sufficient capacity as a seaman and navigator, and who would be willing to take the risk, but John Strout; but John was liable to get the worse for liquor, and therefore would not do.

"What a fool a man is," said Ben to himself, "to make a beast of himself with rum! Now, there is John Strout, as capable, noble-hearted a fellow, and as good a seaman and navigator, as ever stepped on a vessel's deck, and likes to go to sea, which I never did (only went to get money), poking about these shores in a fisherman, when he might be captain of as fine a ship as ever swum, kept down by rum, and nothing else. I wish Sally would let me go. I am a good mind to ask her."

Ben at length became so possessed with the idea, that, unable any longer to keep it to himself, he broached it to his father, fully expecting to be ridiculed, when, to his utter astonishment, the old seaman said, "I think it can be done, Ben. I see no difficulty but what can be got over;" and, as usual with him, forgetting all the risk in the profits of the adventure, exclaimed, "What a slap a fellow could make, hey! Ben, if he only gets there. The Spaniards are hungry for lumber, for they have been kept short through the war."

Hosted by Google

"But the greatest difficulty of all is, who will go as master? You know I promised Sally not to go to sea. I won't break it."

"No difficulty at all, Ben. I'll go myself."

"You go, father!"

"I go? Yes; why not? I guess I haven't forgot the road; I've travelled it often enough. I never promised my wife that I'd stay at home, only that I'd try; and I have tried bloody hard, and I can't. I thought I was worn out, but I find I ain't. I'm live oak and copper-fastened. I've got rested and refitted, and am about as good as new. She can't sink, that's a sure case; and I'm sure she can't spring a leak. She'll be like the Mary Dun Dover the old salts tell about, — three decks and nary bottom, with a grog-shop on every jewel-block, and a fiddler's-green on every yard-arm. She'll be like the Irishman's boots, — a hole in the toe to let the water in, and another in the heel to let it out; so there will be no pumping."

It is often the case in our plans that one prominent difficulty prevents for the time all considerations of others, which being removed, the lesser ones present themselves. It was thus with Ben. At first the great difficulty was to find a master; now others presented themselves.

Hosted by Google

"Can you sell a cargo of lumber for money? Won't you have to take sugar or molasses? They all do; and then you will have no way to get it home, without costing more than it is worth, for you will have to pay just what freight they have a mind to ask."

"The Spaniards have got money enough; your lumber is of an extra quality, and if you offer it a little less for cash, there will be no trouble. They will jump at it like a dolphin at a flying-fish. You can afford to sell it a good deal less, and then make your jack."

"Do you think you can get men to go in such a craft?"

"Go? yes. These boys round here will go to sea on a shingle with me. John Strout will go for mate, to begin with. I tell you, my boy," slapping him on the back, "you've hit the nail on the head this time. Only think what the doubloons will be worth here, where it takes five dollars of our Continental money to buy a mug of flip. If you offered Mr. Welch the gold, he would discount the interest on your debt, and part of the principal, and be glad of the chance. Suppose you should take the gold, and go to the farmers, who haven't seen any hard money this ten years, — think you wouldn't get your corn, wheat, and meat cheap!"

Hosted by Google

Our readers will bear in mind, that in the war of the Revolution the Continental Congress issued bills that became depreciated, so that at the close of the war they were not worth much more than the rebel money in the Secession war; and Captain Rhines's statement that it took five dollars of it to buy a mug of flip, was literally true.

Some of the soldiers, who were paid off in this currency, were so enraged when they found how worthless it was, that they tore it up and threw it away; but wealthy and far-seeing men bought it of the soldiers for a song, kept it till it was redeemed, and thus became immensely rich.

This will explain to our young readers why it was that the people were put to such shifts to get along; had to use withes for chains and ropes, make their own cloth and dye-stuffs, and resort to all kinds of contrivances to get along; because, although the country after the war was filled with foreign goods of all kinds, none but the wealthiest had any money to buy them with; and the wealthy people were very few indeed.

Almost all the trade was by barter — swapping one thing for another. Rum, coffee, and sugar were more plenty on the seaboard than anything else, because they could exchange lumber for them

Hosted by Google

in the West Indies. Lumber, too, was sold to the English vessels for money, in the form of spars, and ton-timber ten inches square, which led the people to work in the woods to the neglect of the soil — a thing which, as we shall see by and by, Ben took advantage of.

"I can tell you, my boy," continued the captain, "your going to Boston with the spars wasn't a priming to this; there's money in it; I know there is."

Ben then told his father about the wreck of the masts and spars that came ashore. "Isn't that a God-send, now?"

"What sails were they?"

"A fore-course, fore-topsail, fore-topmast stay-sail, and fore-topgallant yard, with the sail on it, and almost the whole of the topsail halyards, with both blocks."

"They will make glorious throat-halyards. Were the shear-poles wood or iron?"

"Iron."

"They will be first rate to cut up for bolts. Now, Ben, you get your logs to the mill, and get them sawed, and the boards home; and when the weather comes a little warmer, I'll hire somebody to work on the farm with John, and I'll come over

Hosted by Google

to the island, and we will put her right through. I can hew and bore, but you must be master-carpenter. When it comes to making sails and fitting rigging, I can do that, or we'll do it between us."

Ben now dismissed all misgivings. He knew that his father was at home in all kinds of craft, from a canoe to a ship; had stowed all manner of cargoes; and having from boyhood been flung upon his own resources, was fertile in expedients. The quickness of decision manifested by the captain was by no means an indication of superficial knowledge, but his mind was quick in all its movements; and all seafaring matters had been with him subjects of mature thought and practical experience from early life, and his judgment was equal to his resolution.

In short, he belonged to that class of men called lucky, which was one reason why men liked to go with him. In all his going to sea, he had never lost a man overboard.

"The greatest difficulty I see," said Ben, "is keeping the timber together, and high enough out of water to keep the sea from breaking over her; but I think I have found a way, for I have been studying upon it more than six months."

He then told his father how he meant to build

Hosted by Google

the raft, or craft, whichever it might be called, which he highly approved. In maturing his plan, Ben had fixed upon the summer as the best time in which to make the voyage, as the winds were then moderate; but his father dissented from this entirely. "In the first place," said he, "if the winds in the summer are light, they are more likely to be ahead; and such a thing as that will not work to windward; and, if you heave her too, she will make leeway at a great rate; all her play will be before the wind, or with the wind on the quarter. October is a better month than July or August; then we always have northerly or north-west winds. We might take a norther that would shove us across the gulf. The summer is a bad time on account of the yellow fever, and men will not be so willing to go."

"I see, father, it's just as you say; besides, there is another thing I did not consider; we cannot get canvas to put sail enough on her to do much without a fair, or nearly fair, wind."

"Just so, Ben."

"There is another reason, father. The boards that are sawed this spring, having all summer to season, will be dry and light, and the craft will not be half so deep in the water, which will be a great thing."

Hosted by Google

"I guess it will; for the most danger will be of the sea overtaking and breaking on her. In the fall of the year," said the captain, "there will be fowls, potatoes, and other things we can carry as a venture, that will help pay expenses."

When their deliberations became known to Mrs. Rhines, she was by no means pleased with the turn matters had taken. "I thought, Benjamin," she said, with a reproachful look, "that after you had been gone almost all the time since we were married, you would stay at home with your family, and make my last days happy, and not go beating about at sea in your old age, when you've got a good home, and enough to carry you down the hill of life. I declare, I think it is a clear tempting of Providence, after you have been preserved so many years. I shouldn't wonder if something should happen to you, and I don't thank Ben for putting it into your head. He won't go himself, and leave Sally, but he'll send his old father."

"Goodness, wife! don't take it so serious. What's a trip to the West Indies? just to cheat the winter, and get home to plant potatoes in the spring. I'll bring you home a hogshead of sugar, and you can make all the preserves you like. I'll bring you home guava jelly, and tamarinds, and

Hosted by Google

pine-apple preserves; and you know you like to have such things to give to sick folks. Most all the neighborhood is sick when you have them."

"These things are all well enough in their way," replied his wife, while a tear stole down her cheek, "but they cannot make up for your absence; but I suppose it must be."

"Don't cry, wife. I don't want to grieve you, and I'm sure I don't want to leave you; but you know what a good child Ben has been to us; how nobly he stepped forward when I was in trouble, and helped me out, and is now feeling the want of the money he then gave me. There's nobody can take charge of this craft, and help him now as I can, and I think I ought to do it."

When Ben returned from his visit to his father, he told Sally and Joe the whole matter.

"Now I know," said Sally, "what you have been thinking about so long, and talking about in your sleep all this winter."

"And I," said Joe, "know what all these boards stuck up to dry, and that cedar, mean; and what made you so delighted when all that rigging and iron-work came ashore. I should have thought you would. Good on your head, Ben! I'll stand blacksmith, for I have worked most a year in a

Hosted by Google

blacksmith's shop; and when you get her ready for sea I'll go in her; and, if I go, Seth Warren will go, too, for he can't live without me, and there will be two good corn-fed boys at any rate."

They now improved the few remaining days of winter in hauling the remainder of the logs from the woods, and then began with all despatch to raft them to the mill, bringing the boards back as fast as they were sawed, and sticking them up to season. They found the Perseverance, that lay in the cove, very convenient for towing their rafts.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XII.

THE MYSTERIOUS PIG.

It was now the last of March. The fish-hawks and herons began to return, and the whistlers and sea-ducks to come in on to the feeding-grounds.

Charles had business enough. He began to put in practice the lessons he had learned in the winter, and killed four whistlers out of the first flock that came. He launched his canoe, and began to catch rock-fish on the points of the Bull, and a reef that lay about half a mile from the island; he also carried a lot of baskets over to John and Fred to sell.

Often in the morning, just as the day was breaking, Ben and Sally would be awakened from sleep by the report of Charlie's gun, as at that time the fowl began to come from outside, where they had passed the night sleeping on the water, to their feeding-grounds round the ledges.

Old Mr. Smullen's black and white sow had twelve pigs. Ben heard of it, and determined to have one of them. Charlie heard him talking about

Hosted by Google

it with Sally. A few days after he went to Sally, and said, "Mother, you know that money that I got for baskets the other day?"

"Yes."

"I was going to buy some cloth, and have you make me a sail for my boat; but I mean to take the money and buy one of Mr. Smullen's pigs for father."

"O, Charlie, I never would do that. You know how you have been looking forward all winter long to having a sail to your boat, and how that birch-bark sail plagues you; it is always ripping out, and coming to pieces, and you have to keep making it over. Ben can buy the pig well enough."

"But, mother, you know how good father is to me; just as good as he can be. He often lets me go over and see John, when I know he needs me at home, and got all that powder and shot; and he needs every penny to pay for the island, because he has to pay the interest to Mr. Welch, and that, you know, is just the same as paying rent. O, that's an awful sound! The rent day is dreadful."

"But, Charlie, it isn't so here, and Mr. Welch is not like your old-country landlords."

"Do let me do it, mother. I have made you a sink, and a press-board, and a rolling-pin, and a

Hosted by Google

great wooden spoon, and a bread-trough; but I have never made father anything."

"Well, Charlie, you are a good boy, and you may do as you wish."

"Mother, you mustn't tell him. I want to get the pig and put him in the sty before he knows anything about it."

"I don't see how you are going to work to leave the island, and get a pig, and he never know it."

"O, mother, when a boy gets anything in his head, he is bound to do it, by hook or by crook."

That very day, when Ben came in to dinner, he said, "Sally, we ought to have that pig to eat the milk. It is too bad to throw away all the skim-milk and buttermilk. I guess I must take time and go over to-night and get him."

"I wouldn't go to-night, Ben; you will be going with a raft next week, and I can save the milk till then."

That night, as soon as the rest were asleep, Charles crept down stairs barefoot, and, sitting down on the door-step, put on his shoes and stockings. He then got into his canoe, and pulled across the water for Captain Rhines's. When he reached the house Tige was lying on the door-step; the old dog knew Charlie, and came towards him, stretching

Hosted by Google

himself, yawning, and wagging his tail. "Good dog," said Charlie, patting him on the head. Tige held out his paw to shake hands. Charlie knocked at the door, while the dog stood by him. Captain Rhines put his head out of the window to inquire who was there.

"It's Charlie."

"Is anybody sick?"

"No, sir; but I want to see John."

"What do you want of John, this time of night?"

Charlie told him. The captain called John, and in a few moments the boys were hurrying off for Smullen's, where they called the old man out of bed, and got the pig, and Charlie was soon on his return to the island. He put the pig in the pen, and creeping up stairs as still as a mouse, got into bed just as the gray light was beginning to break.

As they were eating breakfast they heard a strange sound.

"Hark! what noise is that?" said Ben.

"It sounds like a pig squealing," said Joe.

"But we haven't got any pig."

"I guess it's a fish-hawk," said Charles, scarcely able to contain himself at beholding the puzzled look of Ben and Joe.

Hosted by Google

In a few moments a louder and shriller sound arose. "It's a pig, as I'm a sinner!" exclaimed Joe. Ben rushed out of doors, following the sound, to the sty, where was a bright little black and white pig, about eight weeks old.

"O, what a beauty!" cried Charlie; "I am so glad. Where do you suppose he came from, father?"

"That is what I should like to know."

"It came from Uncle Jonathan Smullen's sow, I know," said Joe; "for it's just the color, and about the right age. I don't believe but he brought it on, and is round here somewhere now."

"He's too old a man to come on here alone; besides, he never would leave the island without first coming to the house to get something to wet his whistle."

"Didn't Uncle Isaac," said Sally, "know that you were going to have a pig of Smullen?"

"Yes; for I sent word to Smullen by him to save me one."

"Perhaps he and Uncle Sam have gone over to Smutty Nose, or somewhere, gunning, and brought the pig; they didn't like to disturb us before day, and so put him in the pen."

"That's it, Sally, and they will be here to dinner."

Hosted by Google

Ben looked in vain for Uncle Isaac all that day; no Uncle Isaac came; but he satisfied himself with the idea that he brought the pig.

The next day, as Ben was sitting after dinner smoking, Charlie came running in, crying that the pig had got out, and run into the woods.

"Then we shall never find him," said Ben.

Charlie burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Charlie. Which way did he go?"

"He took right up among the brush and tree-tops, where you cut the timber. I didn't see him, but I heard him, and followed the sound. There it is again."

The pig was now heard squealing among a great mass of tops of trees; and, as they followed the sound, it grew fainter in the distance, and finally ceased altogether.

"Is there no way to get him, father?" said Charlie, with downcast looks, while the tears stood in his eyes.

"Perhaps he will come out to-night, and come round the house when he grows hungry, and all is still. I will set a box-trap, and put some corn in it, and we can, I think, catch him."

While they were talking they heard a squealing in the direction of the sty, and, looking around,

Hosted by Google

saw the pig poking his nose out between the logs, and squealing for his dinner.

With a shout of joy, Charlie jumped over the fence, and caught the pig up in his arms, and hugged him, and scratched him. "You pretty little creature!" said he, "you shall have some dinner. I thought I had lost you. But, father, mother, how did he get back into the pen and we never see him?"

"He never did get back; he has never been out of it."

"Then, what pig was that in the woods?"

"That's more than I know, Charles."

It was Charlie's turn to be puzzled now, as well as the rest. They examined the pen all round; there was not a crack large enough to let a pig through.

"I declare," said Sally, "I'm almost frightened."

"I can't tell what it means," said Ben; "there's certainly another pig in the woods."

When Ben went to work he told Joe. Joe agreed that it was very strange. About dark they heard it again. That night they set the trap close by the pig-pen, and put some corn in it. "He will hear the other pig," said Ben, "and come out after we are all abed, and we shall catch him."

Charlie was up by daylight in the morning; the

Hosted by Google

trap was sprung. He made sure he had caught the pig. They took the trap over into the pen to let him out. Sally and Joe came out to look. "Father," cried Charlie, "only see that little rogue of a piggee, he's lonesome. Only look at him, father, smelling round the trap; he thinks he's going to have a playfellow and bedfellow."

While Charlie was chattering away, Ben opened the trap. Charlie was stooping down, with both hands on his knees, looking at the place where the trap was to open. Out jumped a raccoon, right in his face, and went over the side of the pen in an instant. Charlie was so frightened, that, in trying to jump back, he fell on his back, and the pig snorted and ran to his nest. The rest burst into roars of laughter. Joe was so tickled that he lay down on the ground and rolled.

Charlie got up, looking wild and frightened.

"What was it, father, a wolf?"

"No, Charlie, a coon. That was the creature whose tracks you saw in the snow, and thought they were a little child's."

"I wish I could see it. I was so startled I had no time to look. Couldn't I set the trap again, and catch him, and keep him, and have him tame for a pet?"

Hosted by Google

"I wouldn't. You have got a pig, and the little calf that came the other day. He would be apt to kill the chickens, and suck the eggs, and be a great plague."

The next morning was one of those delightful spring mornings, which one who has witnessed them on the shore can never forget. The trees, partly leaved, were reflected in the glassy water, and fish and fowl seemed actuated by an unusual spirit of activity. Ben told Charles it was so calm he wanted him to go over to his father's, and tell him that he was going to begin to work on the timber the next day, and to ask his mother if she would let one of the girls come over and keep house a little while, as Sally wanted to go home and make a visit.

"Well, Charlie," said Captain Rhines, "have you come after another pig?"

"No, sir; we've got two pigs now."

"Two pigs!"

"Yes, sir; leastways when we catch one of them."

He then told him about the pig in the woods — how they tried to find him, and set a trap for him, and caught a raccoon.

"I know who the pig in the woods is," said John; "it's Joe Griffin; he can talk like anybody, or

Hosted by Google

imitate any kind of critter. It's him, I'll wager my life, and he's been making fools of the whole of you."

"I never knew he could do such things."

"But," said the captain, "Ben and Sally do; and I should have thought they would have taken the hint before this time. Have they found out where the other pig came from?"

"No, sir; they think Uncle Isaac brought him on when he was going a-gunning."

"I tell you what you do, Charlie; the next time you hear the pig squeal, you set the brush on fire (the fire won't do any harm this time of year), and see what comes of it."

"That I will, sir; I'll warm his back for him."

"Did Ben say you must come right back?"

"No, sir; he said it was a good ways for a boy like me to pull, but that I might stay till afternoon; and, if the wind blew hard, stay till it was calm."

The boys went down to the cave, because Charlie wanted to see Tige catch sculpins and flounders. Then they sat down under the great willow to talk, and John showed Charles the place where Tige tumbled down the bank when Pete Clash and his crew were beating him.

Hosted by Google

"What kind of a time did Fred have on the island?"

"O, he had a bunkum time. He said he never had so good a time in his life."

"Did he like me?"

"Yes; he liked you first rate. He said he was so glad you didn't know how to shoot."

"What for?"

"Because, he said, you knew so much more than he did, and could do so many things, that he should have felt as if he was a fool, if he couldn't have shown you something."

"I can shoot now. I shot a blue-bill, and three old squaws, and horse-headed coot last week. When I first got up I saw them in the mouth of the brook; they were playing and diving. When they would dive, I would run up while they were under water, till I got behind some bushes, and then I crawled up and cut away."

"Fred told me about your bedstead, — how handsome it was, — and about the sink; I must come over and see that. I want you to tell me what you told Fred about the time your father was pressed; won't you, Charlie?"

"I will, John, some time when we sleep together. I don't like to tell you in the daytime, because it

Hosted by Google

makes me cry, and I don't like to cry before folks; but in the night, when we are in bed, I'll tell you. I liked Fred very much, and so we all did; you tell him I said so — won't you?"

"Yes; we'll go over and see him after dinner; by that time the wind will be at the eastward, and you can sail home. Fred has got some tame rabbits."

"Where did he get them?"

"Some of them are young ones the cat caught, and he got them away from her before she hurt them; and the rest are old ones that he caught in a trap. Are there any rabbits on the island?"

"No, not one; but there's raccoons and squirrels. Don't you think, there ain't any birds there, — only the sea-fowl. Sometimes wild pigeons, woodpeckers, robins, and blue-jays come on there, but they fly right off again; I wish they would stay and build nests. We have such a sight of birds in Lincolnshire! O, I wish you could hear a lark sing! they will start from the ground, and go right up straight in the air, singing all the way; and when you can't see them you can hear them sing. Why, the swallows build right in the thatch."

"Thatch! what is that?"

"Why, they cover the houses with straw, instead of shingles."

Hosted by Google

"I should think the water would run right through."

"It won't; they're just as tight as can be."

"Can you do it?"

"Yes; I've helped my father mend the thatch a hundred times."

"Some time let's make a little house, just as they do there, and you make a straw roof."

"Well, so we will. They make houses there mostly of stone, and we can get plenty of stones, on the island. They make bee-hives there of straw."

At dinner-time Captain Rhines said, "Wife, you must tell Ben whether you will let him have one of the girls."

"Indeed, if you are going on there to work, I've a good mind to go, too; I ought to know how to keep house by this time."

"You never said a better thing, wife; you know how much Ben thinks of his mother; he would be in 'kingdom come.'"

"Well, you are going away this winter, and if I thought the girls could get along —"

"Get along, mother! we'll get along first rate," was the unanimous response.

"But then there's the soap; I was thinking of making soap this week."

Hosted by Google

This was only adding fuel to the fire. Filled with the idea of making soap, the girls were now determined she should go.

"Why, mother," said Mary, the eldest, "we can make the soap. I have helped you make it a great many times, and if there is anything I don't know, I can get Mrs. Hadlock to show us. What shall we be good for, if we are always tied to your apron-strings, and never try to do anything for ourselves?"

"Sure enough," said the father; "'twill be a good thing for you and John both; you can take care in the house, and he out of doors."

"I'll set up the leach for you," said John; "and after the soap is made, if we have good luck, we'll have a celebration, and make candy."

"Come, wife, make up your mind; don't worry about the children; if I ain't afraid to leave the farm to John, I'm sure you needn't be afraid to leave the house to the girls. I've no idea of doing with our John as old Peter —— did with his boy Jim. He never learnt Jim to do anything, or contrive anything, for himself, from the time he was hatched. 'James,' the old man would say in the morning, 'do you go into the barn-yard, and look in the north-east corner, and you will find a

Hosted by Google

hoe; take that hoe, and go down to the western field, and begin to hoe on the acre piece, and stick two punkin seeds in every other hill.' After the old man died, Jim was good for nothing, because he never knew where to find the hoe; lost his land, and is now working out at day's work, and is as poor as Lazarus."

Mrs. Rhines was not at all convinced that she was of such little consequence in the household, and that affairs could proceed so easily without her.

"There is that quilt," she said, "that I meant to have had put into the frames next week."

This ill-judged speech only made her absence more desirable.

"O, mother!" was the unanimous cry, "we can quilt the quilt."

"There, girls, hold your tongues; you know you can do no such thing."

"Yes, mother, we can; because we can get Hannah Murch, Aunt Molly Bradish, and Sukey Griffin, and do it first-rate."

"I want the fun of quilting it myself. Well, I will go; the quilt can stand till I get back. Charlie, you tell Ben I'm coming to keep house for him, but he must come after me himself, in his great canoe; I'm a scareful creature by water; I ain't a

Hosted by Google

bit like Mrs. Hadlock or Sally — willing to go anywhere in a clam-shell."

The next morning Ben took Sally to the main land, and brought his mother on to the island. It was a great gratification to Ben to have his father and mother on the island, in his own home; and the hours of relaxation from labor were seasons of heartfelt enjoyment.

Charlie lost no time putting into execution Captain Rhines's directions in respect to the pig, having first enjoined upon them the greatest secrecy, not even permitting them to tell Ben and Sally of his plots and suspicions, lest Joe, who was very quick of perception, should divine what was in store for him.

In the first place, he made a fire of some old oak and maple stumps and chips, in a hollow of the ledge, that he might have some brands at hand whenever he might want them. A day or two passed away, and nothing was heard of the pig. The fire smouldered away in the old roots, and Charlie once in the while flung on fresh fuel.

At length, one day, just after Joe had eaten his dinner, and gone to work, while Ben and the captain sat down to talk a little while with Mrs. Rhines, he heard him squealing in the midst of a great mass

Hosted by Google

of brush, composed of the tops of several large pines, and branches from other trees which had been flung upon them, in clearing a road to haul the logs. The whole mass lay up very high from the ground, and underneath the pig was running about and squealing for dear life. The brush, which had been cut the year before, was full of pitch, and as apt to catch as tinder. The moment Charlie heard the noise, he ran to the place, and began to call, "Pig, pig;" and piggy replied by squealing with all his might.

"Poor piggy, are you hungry? Wait a minute, and I will get you some corn."

He ran to the house and got some corn in a dish, and to the fire for a brand; he called the pig, rattled the corn in the dish with one hand, and with the other lighted the brush in different places, as he walked around the heap.

"Chook, chook," cried Charlie; squeal, squeal, went the pig.

The cunning boy had now fired the heap in a dozen places, completely encircling the pig. A slight breeze now sprang up as the flood tide made, and in an instant the fire, which had been gradually making progress, began to roar and crackle, and soon swept through the brush in a sheet of flame.

Hosted by Google

"Jerusalem, what is this!" bellowed a voice, and Joe Griffin leaped out from the midst of the burning pile; the brands rolled off the back of his woollen shirt, which was thoroughly singed, while a fox-skin cap he wore was scorched to a crisp, as was his hair; he ran round and round, as though he was mad, blowing his fingers (which where slightly burned), and slapping them on his thighs, while on his face was a mingled expression of pain, arising from the burn, and anger at being outwitted.

"Pig, pig, pig-e-e!" screamed Charlie, rattling the corn, and laughing as though he would split between every word.

"Shut up, you little brat!" cried Joe, flinging a pitch knot at him with a good will, that, if he had not dodged, would have broken his head.

Roused by the uproar, and smelling the smoke, the whole family ran to see what was the matter. They could not help laughing to see the figure Joe made dancing about, and blowing his fingers.

"What is the matter, Joe?" asked Ben.

"The pig has bit him," cried Charlie. "O, I wish John was here."

Joe ran off to the beach to cool his fingers.

"What in the world," said Sally, "is the reason, that when we both of us have always known what

Hosted by Google

a mimic Joe is, that we couldn't have thought it was him squealing, and making such fools of us. How did you know it was him, Charlie?"

"John told me; and I don't believe he'll try to be pig in the brush again."

"Father," said Ben, "do you know whether Uncle Isaac has been on any of the islands gunning?"

"No; but I don't believe he has fired a gun these three weeks; he's been too busy. Why?"

"Because there's a pig in the pen that came there we don't know how; all we know is, that we found him there."

"Why," said Mrs. Rhines, looking up from her work, "Charlie got a pig."

Sally gave her mother Rhines a nudge to keep dark, but it was too late. Ben had heard the remark, and insisted upon knowing.

"Well," said his mother, "I suppose I am telling tales out of school; but Charlie came to our house in the middle of the night, and called John out of bed, and they took off, as though they were possessed, to Jonathan Smullen's, after a pig."

"That was well planned, Charlie," said Joe; "and I'll forgive you for singeing me so."

"I should never have thought of setting the

Hosted by Google

brush on fire, Mr. Griffin, if Captain Rhines had not told me to."

"We are square now, Joe," said the captain; "your scorching will do to offset the fright you gave me, when I thought I had shot Ben, having put one bullet through the window, and the other into a milk-pan of eggs, on the dresser."

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XIII.

A NOVEL CRAFT.

JOHN STROUT now came from the West Indies, and went to work with them. He brought home tamarinds, guava jelly, and other good things for Sally; a hat made of palm-leaf for Ben, and some shells for Charlie. He also brought Ben a cocoa-nut to keep liquor in; the end of it, where the eyes are, was made in the shape of a negro's face; the two little round places, where we bore to let the milk out, serving the purpose of eyes, with eyebrows cut over them, and filled with some red matter; in the mouth was a lead pipe to drink from; large ears were also made, and a nose; the figure looked somewhere between a monkey and a negro, funny enough, and was full of rum. He also brought them home twenty-five pounds of coffee, and a hundred weight of sugar.

Charlie was very much puzzled to know how the meat was got out of the shell without breaking it. John told him that he bored the hole for the mouth,

Hosted by Google

and then turned the milk out, filled it with salt water, and set it in the sun, when, the meat decaying, he washed it all out; then scraping the outside with a knife and piece of glass, oiled it, and made the face with an old file, which he ground to a sharp point.

Ben and Joe now commenced their craft, laying the keel on the beach, making the rough skeleton of a vessel. As their object was neither beauty nor durability, only to serve the present occasion, they used all the cedar possible, that she might be the more buoyant.

They took the iron from the spars, and Joe, who had worked in a blacksmith shop, took it over to the main land to a shop, and made their fastening. They, however, used but very little iron, making wooden treenails answer the purpose. They made a bow and stern frame, and set up two ribs on a side where the masts were to come, laid a rough deck at the mast-holes, and forward for the windlass and the heel of the bowsprit to rest on; the remainder was all open. They then put on two streaks of plank next the keel, to hold the ends of the timbers, and hung the wales.

As Uncle Isaac had finished his planting, he now came to work with them; they made the windlass,

Hosted by Google

rudder, and spars; they also sheathed the bow and stern with boards, where she entered and left the water, so as to diminish the friction somewhat. The spars looked queer enough: they were beautiful sticks, as straight as a rush; but there was no labor expended upon them, except what was absolutely necessary. She was to be rigged into a schooner, — and an awful great one she was, carrying more than three hundred thousand of timber. The masts, where the hoops were to run, were as smooth as glass, but as to the part below the deck it was just as it grew; so with the other spars, — where there was no necessity of their being smooth, the bark was left on the stick.

Ben now ascertained that there was a large trade carried on from Wiscasset in spars and ton-timber, that was shipped to Europe. He accordingly took what he had, and making them into a raft, sold them there, and bought his rudder-irons, a second-hand jib and flying-jib, and provisions for his workmen.

She now sat on the beach ready for her sails and cargo, and the tide ebbed and flowed, and the winds blew through her frame. It must be confessed she was a craft of magnificent distances, and probably could not have been insured at Lloyd's. It was

Hosted by Google

not desirable to load her till near the time of starting, in order that the cargo might not water-soak, as the great object was to render her as buoyant as possible. Ben therefore discharged his men, while he and his father went to work on the rigging. Uncle Isaac went home, while Joe went on a fishing cruise with John Strout.

During all this period Charlie had been by no means idle; there were a great many things he could do to help along. When the men were hewing, he, with his narrow axe, could score in and beat off for them (that is, cut notches in the timber, close together, and then split out the wood between), which very much facilitated the labor of hewing. He could also drive treenails; and when the men were not using the broad axe, would hew out small sticks with a skill that called forth many compliments from Uncle Isaac, who took great pains to show him, and found a most apt scholar.

Charlie now became very anxious to see his mother. Every day or two he would say to Ben, "What does make mother stay so long? she never did before; she used to think she could not go to be gone a day, and now she has been gone almost a month."

At length, one pleasant morning, Ben, to his

Hosted by Google

great joy, took the canoe, and went to bring her home. If Charlie went down to the eastern point once that day with the spy-glass, he went fifty times.

"I can't do anything," he said to Captain Rhines, "nor set myself about anything, till I know whether mother is coming."

It was about the middle of the afternoon when Charlie saw the white sail of the canoe in Captain Rhines's cove, and she soon came into view before a light southerly wind. Charlie saw through the glass his mother sitting in the stern, and, jumping into his canoe, went to meet them.

"Why, mother!" said he, "what makes you look so pale? are you sick?"

"No, Charlie; I never was better in my life."

When they neared the shore Charlie pulled ahead, and landing, stood ready to hug his mother as soon as she should get out of the canoe.

"Don't hug me hard," said she, kissing him, "for you might do some damage."

"O, mother! what is that under your shawl? do let me see. Is it the cloth for my breeches?"

"Look," said she, opening the folds of her shawl.

"O, a little baby! Whose is it? Where did you get it? What a wee bit of a thing! what

Hosted by Google

little mites of hands! I wish it would wake up and open its eyes. O, I do love babies so! and how I shall love your baby, — our baby. It will be my brother — won't it, mother?"

"Yes, Charlie; but let us go up to the house, and let Captain Rhines and his wife see the grandchild."

"Now, mother," said Charlie (after the grandparents had seen and admired the baby, and they had drunk a cup of tea in honor of his arrival), "I want you to go and see my pig, and the rabbits. You don't know how piggy has grown. Mrs. Rhines told me it would make him grow to wash him; so every Monday, when she had done washing, I put him in the tub, and washed him, and the black on him is just as black as ink, and the white as white as snow. I have made him a nest in the woods, and he goes there every night and sleeps."

It was not the custom in those days to put pigs in pens and keep them there; they let them run about the door, and feed in the pasture with the cattle, only putting them up in the fall to fatten; or when they bought a strange one in the spring, they shut him up till he got tame.

"Mother, would you believe that a pig knew

Hosted by Google

anything? I've taught him to follow me all round, just like a dog, and come running out of the woods when I call him. I've named him Rover; and don't you think he knows when the tide is down just as well as I do; then he goes to the beach, and digs clams with his nose; he never goes a clamming at high water. When I am fishing for flounders he will sit by me till I pull up a fish, and then he will swallow it in no time; sometimes I say, 'Rover, you can't have that; it is for the house;' and he will look so wishful I have to give it to him."

"I never heard of such a pig before, Charlie; I expect you will learn him to play with sea ducks.

"I never thought of that, mother; I don't believe but I will. Mother, you know Fred Williams gave me some rabbits?"

"Yes."

"Well, they have got young ones. O, they are the prettiest little things that ever were; come and see them;" and, getting her by the hand, he drew her out of doors.

"Mother," he said, "it was not altogether to see the pig that I got you out here."

"I thought as much, Charlie."

"Well, sit down on this nice log; I want to

Hosted by Google

tell you what good people Captain Rhines and his wife are; you don't know how good they are."

"Yes, I do, Charlie; they're real estate — both of them. I never shall forget when my father died, and mother was left poor and broken-hearted, with a family of little children, and knew not which way to turn. Captain Rhines was at home that year; they were building a vessel for him; he came over every night to see her, and every time he seemed to lift some of the load from mother's heart. Somehow, it seemed to me that he did more good than the minister, for when he came she would sit and cry all the while he was talking to her, and after he was gone; but when Captain Rhines came, he gave her life and courage, and she would go about the house quite cheerful; sometimes he would slip money into her hand."

"I suppose," said Charlie, "she needed that more than praying, because she could pray for herself."

"I tell you what it is, Charlie; if Captain Rhines should live to be old, and needed some of his children to take care of him, wouldn't I pay that debt up, principal and interest, as far as was in my power?"

"I'll bet you would, mother; and I'd help you."

"I've waked up at sunrise many times, and seen Captain Rhines and Ben ploughing for mother;

Hosted by Google

they would plough till nine o'clock, then go home, eat their breakfast, and then do their own work, while mother and I, with Sam to drop the seed, would plant it, and the next day they would get more ready."

"Now, mother, I want you to see the pig." Charlie began to slap his hands on his sides, and cry, 'Rover, Rover,' when a great rustling was heard in the woods, and the pig came on the gallop, his black and white sides glistening in the sun as he ran. Living on grass, and in the woods, with the milk from the house, he had not that protuberance of belly which swine reared in sties possess, and really merited Charlie's encomium of being handsome; he jumped up on his master and rubbed against his legs, with low grunts, expressive of satisfaction.

Ben and his father now built a shed just sufficient to shelter them from the sun and rain, and let in the cool summer breeze. Here they fitted the rigging, and altered the ship's sails into those of a schooner; and so well versed were Captain Rhines and his son in all nautical matters, that, by dint of splicing and piecing, they managed to get all the standing rigging, and nearly all the running gear, out of the materials of the wreck. They now put

Hosted by Google

the rigging over the mast-heads, and set it up, and all was ready, except bending the sails.

In the spring, soon after Ben had told his father of his plan, the captain said to Charlie, "Now you set all the hens you can, and raise chickens, and when I go to the West Indies you can send them out as a venture, and get coffee, sugar, and cocoa-nuts."

Charlie told his mother, and they put their heads together, and set every hen that was broody, insomuch that Ben complained that he could not get an egg to eat. In addition to this, Charlie went and borrowed sitting hens of Uncle Isaac, Sam Yelf, and Joe Bradish.

"I tell you another thing you do," said the captain: "negroes there use lots of baskets, that they carry on their heads, filled with oranges and other things; they also use them in loading and unloading vessels, and sometimes they carry them by straps of green hide that go over their shoulders. Now, you make some handsome square baskets, with flat bottoms, and they will be so much better than theirs that they, or their masters, will buy them."

"How can the slaves buy them? Do they have money?"

"Money! yes."

Hosted by Google

"How do they get it?"

"Why, they have Sundays and holidays to themselves, and what they earn they have. Many of them have earned enough to buy their freedom, and are well off. Do you go over to our house, and ask John to give you some turnip-seed, and sow it on that ground you burned over when you was roasting Joe Griffin, and see what turnips will grow there; you can hack the seed in with the hoe; turnips will sell first rate in the West Indies; I'll tell them they are Yankee yams."

"But how will you get your things home? you will have no vessel to come in."

"Let me alone for that, Charlie; I'm an old traveller."

It may be well to inform our readers that in those days but comparatively few vegetables were carried there, and they brought a high price in the way of barter.

Charlie was by no means slack in acting upon these suggestions, and made baskets with all his might.

It was a most comical sight to see Ben holding his baby; his thumb was bigger than the infant's leg, and his great hairy arms contrasted strangely enough with the white, delicate flesh of the new-

Hosted by Google

born child. He held it, too, in such a funny way, with the tips of his fingers, as if afraid he should squat it to death, and with an expression of anxiety upon his face amounting almost to anguish.

"I mean to make a cradle for him," said Charlie.

"You are too late," said Ben; "for the cradle was made before he was born, long enough."

He then told Charlie to go up chamber, and look under some boards in the north-east corner; and there he found the cradle that Sam Atkins made for the boy, whose birth Seth Warren, in a spirit of prophecy, foretold upon the day the house was raised.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BURN.

It was now the latter part of summer. The vessel being completed as far as was possible at present, Captain Rhines went home, leaving Ben and Charlie alone. There was now a large piece of land running along the eastern side of the island, beside the middle ridge, which was ready for a burn. From this land Ben had hauled his spars, and logs for boards, leaving the tops of the trees and all the brush; in addition to this there was left quite a growth of other trees, that were not fit for timber; these he and Joe had cut early in the spring, so that the soil was completely covered with a dense mass of combustible matter, as dry as tinder. Ben was very anxious to burn this. He had now two cows, a bull, and a yoke of oxen, and was obliged to buy hay and bring on to the island for them, which was a great deal of work. He had to hire his oxen pastured away in the summer, as the island was so densely covered with wood that it afforded

Hosted by Google

but little pasturage, which was eked out by falling maple trees for them to browse. It was therefore of the greatest importance to burn this land, and get it into grass as soon as possible; but Ben hesitated a long time, fearing that he might burn himself up, it was so dry, and hoping that a shower would come to wet the grass, so the fire would not run. At length it was evident he must burn it, or it would be too late to sow, as he would soon be engaged in loading his timber, and have no opportunity.

One morning, when the dew was very heavy, almost equal to rain, and the slight wind from the south-west blew directly away from the buildings, he determined to make the attempt. In the first place they removed everything from the house to the beach; then they hauled Charlie's canoe up to the house, and filled it with water; they also filled all the barrels, troughs, and tubs about the premises, and drove the cattle to the beach, lest the fire should run into the woods.

Ben would have ploughed two or three furrows around his buildings, which would have been the most effectual preventive; but, after the vessel was built, he had put his oxen away to pasture.

The settlers run great risks in clearing their

Hosted by Google

lands, either of burning up their houses, or of destroying the timber they wish to spare.

A few years since there were fires in Maine that burned for weeks, and destroyed thousands of acres of timber, and cattle, houses, barns, and many human beings, and even crossed streams.

But there is no other way. Here was a quantity of ground covered with brush, logs, and bushes: to have hauled all this away would have been an endless job, and after that the ground could neither be ploughed nor planted, being entirely matted with green roots, and cold and sour; besides, the moment the sun was let into it, sprouts would begin to spring up from the stumps, and weeds, blackberry, and raspberry bushes from the ground, and cover it all over. But a fire in a few hours will lick up every stick and leaf, except the large logs and stumps, burn up all the bushes, and the whole network of small roots that cover the ground, so that nothing will start for months, as it destroys all the seeds of the weeds and trees, of which the ground is full; and if it is dry, and a thorough burn, will so roast the large stumps that very few of them will ever sprout again, — while, as in Ben's case, most of them are spruce, pine, or fir, that never throw up any sprouts from the roots. There

Hosted by Google

is then left a thick bed of ashes, which receives and fosters whatever is put into it.

Our readers will perhaps recollect, that along the shore of the island was a cleared spot covered with green grass. This cleared land extended back on both sides of the brook for quite a distance, and was dotted over with elms; and on a little knoll, about half way between the brook and the middle ridge, was an enormous rock maple, with that perfect symmetry of proportions which this noble tree often presents. The large lower limbs, bending downwards, came so near to the ground that Charlie could reach the tips of them, by standing on a stone.

How the boy loved this tree! It was beautiful in the spring, with its red buds; beautiful in summer, with its masses of dark-green foliage, and its refreshing shade; but most beautiful of all in the autumn, with its crimson tints, relieved by the lighter colors of the surrounding trees. Here he made his whistles; here he was quite sure in a hot day to find the pig stretched out in the shade, with his nose stuck in the moist, cool earth under a great root, and the cattle lying round chewing their cuds.

He also had a swing under the limbs, made of

Hosted by Google

two long beech withes, that Joe Griffin had twisted for him; and often, after supper, Sally would take her sewing, come up and swing with him; and sometimes he would swing the pig, for he had made a basket that he could put into the swing.

Under ordinary circumstances this large piece of cleared ground would have proved a perfect protection; but it was a sharp drought, and the grass was dead, dry, and inflammable. Nevertheless, as the dew was so heavy, and the grass damp with a fog which had set in the night before, Ben thought there could be no danger, and put in the fire. As it ran along the ground, and gradually crept away from the house, he congratulated himself that all danger was over; but the wind suddenly shifted to the north-east, and drove the fire directly towards the house. Had Ben set the fire at first along the whole line of the brush, there would have been burnt ground between him and the mass of fire, which would have cut off the communication, and he would have been safe; but he set it on one corner, and when the wind shifted, the flame driven by it dried the moisture from the grass, and made rapid progress towards the house, while a large strip of dry grass made a bridge for the fire to travel on.

Hosted by Google

As the wind was not yet strong enough to prevent the fire from running, it made good progress in the right direction, burning all the more thoroughly that it burned slowly; but, on the other hand, it was constantly coming in the direction of the house, increasing its pace as the wind and heat dried up the moisture from the grass.

Soaking blankets in salt water, they spread them on the roof of the house, wet the ground around it, and urged to desperation by the fear of losing their home, beat out the flame from the grass with hemlock boughs, which is the best way to stop fire that is running in grass.

But the wind now began to rise, and as fast as they beat it out in one place it caught in another, as the wind blew the tufts of blazing grass in all directions. Ben's hair and clothes were singed. Sally was frequently on fire, and had it not been that she was clothed in woollen, and that Ben threw water on her, she would have been burned up. The baby, during all this time, had been quietly sleeping in the cradle, but now, waked by the smoke, it began to sneeze and cry.

"Charlie," said Sally, "I can do more at fighting fire than you can; take the baby to the shore, and take care of it."

Hosted by Google

They were now almost worn out with exertion; their eyes and lungs were full of smoke, the perspiration ran in streams from their flesh, and the heat was intolerable; still they fought on, for all they had was at stake.

If the fire reached the house it would not only burn that, but would run to the beach, where was lumber worth hundreds of dollars, which Ben had been nearly two years in preparing for market, — the greater part of which was dry, and would take fire in a moment; there, too, were the sails and rigging.

Ben's large canoe lay upon the beach, in which was some straw that Ben had brought over from his father's to fill beds. Charlie, unable longer to look on, when so much was at risk, put the child into the canoe among the straw, gave it some shells to attract its attention, and ran back to help.

The great wood-pile, within a few yards of the house, now took fire.

"It's no use, Sally," said Ben; "the fire is all around us, and all we have must go."

Sally, uttering a loud scream, ran wildly to the shore. A piece of blazing moss, borne by the wind, had fallen into the canoe, and set fire to the straw, which was blazing up all around the baby. In a

Hosted by Google

moment more it would have been burned to death; as it was, its clothes were scorched, and the little creature terribly frightened.

At this moment a rushing sound was heard, and a vessel with all sail set, and bearing the white foam before her bows with the rapidity of her motion, shot into the harbor, and was run high upon the soft sand of the beach, the tide being at half ebb.

In an instant eight men, leaving the sails to slat in the wind, leaped into the water, and with buckets which they filled as they ran, came to the rescue. One alone lingered to cut some limbs from a hemlock bush, a whole armful of which he brought with him, and while the rest were passing the water from the beach, and pouring on the blazing wood-pile, he was switching out the flames, as they ran towards the beach, with a dexterity that showed he was no novice in fire-fighting.

The wood-pile was composed mostly of logs eight feet in length: while the others poured water on the ends of the sticks, Ben, catching hold of them, dragged them from the pile to a safe distance from the house, and, after a long and desperate struggle, they arrested the progress of the flames.

Scarcely was this accomplished, when the roof

Hosted by Google

was discovered to be on fire; the violence of the wind had blown off a blanket, and the cinders catching had kindled in the dry bark. Ben, taking Charlie, threw him up on the roof, when, the others passing him water, he soon extinguished the flames.

Ben had now opportunity to see who his deliverers were, and to thank them, which he did in no measured terms.

They were John Strout, Henry and Joe Griffin, Seth Warren, Robert Yelf, Sam Edwards, Sydney Chase, and Uncle Isaac. He it was, that, with a coolness that never forsook him, stopped to cut an armful of switches for himself and the rest.

"God bless you, my old friend!" said Ben, grasping him by both hands, "and God bless the whole of you! 'friends in need are friends indeed;' I can't find words to thank you."

Poor Sally, now that the excitement was over, fainted away. Ben carried her into the house, while the others brought in a bed, and by the aid of burnt vinegar applied to her nostrils revived her. Her face was uninjured, but her hair was scorched, and her arms and hands burned, causing her much suffering.

"What shall we do for her?" said Ben; "I have not a bit of salve, nor anything in the house."

Hosted by Google

"I can tell you what to do," said Uncle Isaac; "go and get some of that blue clay by the brook, and mix it up with water that has the chill taken off, and plaster it right on three inches thick, and you'll see what it will do; all you want is to keep the air out."

They procured the clay, and Uncle Isaac fixed it and put it on. It gave instant relief. In a few moments the clay began to dry and crack open, by reason of the heat and inflammation.

"Ben," said Uncle Isaac, "do you sit by her and keep that clay moist with cold water; no matter how cold it is now, it will have the chill taken off before it gets through the clay."

"But how shall we ever get the clay off?"

"You don't want to get it off; the flesh will heal under it, and then it will come off itself."

"How did you know that, Uncle Isaac?"

"The Indians learned me; there's a good deal in an Indian, you'd better believe."

"But won't there want to be some healing-salve on it?"

"Healing-salve? fiddlestick! I've seen Indians cut half to pieces, scalded, and burnt, and get well, and I never saw any salve among them. Now," continued Uncle Isaac (who, though one of the

Hosted by Google

kindest-hearted men alive, was but little given to sentiment, and entirely practical in all his views), "we can do no more good here; let us bring the furniture into the house for Ben, and then I want to finish that burn; we'll set it on fire at the other end; it will be fun to see it come down before the wind. It can do no harm, for there are enough of us to take care of it. I reckon I know something about this business."

His proposal was received with cheers. While some brought the things into the house, others furled the vessel's sails, and carried out an anchor astern, to hold the vessel when she should float, as it was half ebb when they ran her on. Henry Griffin was cook, and they left him aboard to get supper.

At any other time Charlie would have been very anxious to have gone with them, but the suffering of his mother, and the care of the baby, put everything else out of his head. He kissed her again and again, with tears in his eyes, made gruel for her, and did everything in his power to relieve her.

The party found that the fire had made but slow progress against the wind, which now blew half a gale. Arming themselves with blazing brands, they proceeded to the upper part of the piece, and

Hosted by Google

fired the mass of dry material in fifteen or twenty different places. An enormous volume of smoke and flame instantly arose, and swept down before the wind, presenting a truly magnificent spectacle. In clearing land they are not particular to cut every tree. Sometimes there will be an old dead pine full of pitch, that, as it makes no shade to hurt a crop, and draws nothing from the soil, they let it alone. At other times they make what they call a *drive;* they cut a number of trees partly off, and then, picking out a very large one, fall it on the rest, and thus drive them all down together, — as boys set up a row of bricks, and starting one throw down the whole, — which saves them a great deal of cutting. A good many trees are broken off in these drives twenty or thirty feet from the ground, and, if they stand any time in hot weather, the pitch will fry out of them, and run in little yellow threads to the ground. There were a great many trees in this lot that had been standing a good while, and were full of pitch. It was now twilight, and as the flame struck one of these trees the little threads of pitch flashed like powder, and the flame, following them up the body of the tree with a rush and roar, spouted from the top in grand style, amid the loud shouts of the performers. At

Hosted by Google

times there would be a great dry stub as big as a hogshead, and the fire, getting in at the roots, would run up the inside, and roar and blaze from the top like a dozen chimneys.

The flames would also, once in the while, catch a large tree in the forest on the middle ridge, and run from limb to limb clear to the top, shining far into the depths of the forest.

Although it was rare sport, there was a great deal of effort connected with it, as they were obliged to exert themselves to the utmost to prevent the fire from getting into the standing growth on the western side, as on the other side the clearing extended to the shore; but this, with these hardy natures, only gave zest to the proceedings.

"Quit that, Joe Griffin; what are you thrashing me with that hemlock limb for?" cried Robert Yelf.

"Jerusalem! if my eyes ain't so full of smoke that I took your red face for a fire-coal."

Many a rough joke was played, and many a sly blow given and taken, in the smoke. The fire had now nearly spent itself for lack of fuel.

Charlie came to say, Henry wanted to know if they were going to live on firebrands, for he

Hosted by Google

had been waiting with his supper two hours, and was almost starved. They now went on board to eat.

"Come, Ben," said Joe, "go and eat supper with us; and when you get back Charlie can come."

As they were eating, Ben ascertained how it happened that his friends were present so opportunely.

"You see," said Uncle Isaac, "we heard the mackerel were master thick outside; that started us all up. I'd got in my hay, so thought I'd go with the rest. We were beating down, when Joe says to me, 'There's a great smoke over to Ben's.' 'Yes,' I says, 'I guess he's setting his burn.' Then I saw the smoke roll up above the trees, and I was sartain. 'He'll have a capital time, for the wind is just right, and there's a heavy dew.' The words were hardly out of Joe's mouth before the wind shifted right about. Then I was sure there would be trouble. In a few moments we opened out by the head of the island, and saw the blaze. I screamed out, 'The fire is coming right down on Ben's house, and he'll be burnt out in a jiffy!' We were almost abreast of the harbor, and, hauling the sheets aft, shot her right on to the beach."

Hosted by Google

About ten o'clock that night a shower came up. Ben sat by Sally, who had now fallen asleep, listened to the rain upon the roof, moistening the parched earth, and relieving him of all anxiety in respect to the fire kindling again during the night. His heart went up in gratitude to God that his little property had been preserved, and his wife and child had not fallen victims to the fire.

Notwithstanding the mackerel were thick, neither John nor Uncle Isaac would start in the morning till they saw how it fared with Sally, who, to the great delight of all, was much better.

Uncle Isaac inspected Charlie's sink, canoe, and baskets, and praised them very much.

"There's the making of a mechanic in that boy," said he, "and no mean one either."

They then walked over the burn.

"I call that a first-rate burn," said Joe; "a miss is as good as a mile, Ben. Sally is doing well, and this burn will give you your bread-stuffs for a year, and hay for your cattle after that."

The next morning Ben sent Charlie after the widow Hadlock, who came on to take care of her daughter and grandchild.

There were other incidents connected with the

Hosted by Google

burn of a less pleasing nature. Charlie had a very large hen, that the widow Hadlock had given him, which, having stolen her nest, was sitting among the bushes on eighteen eggs, and, too faithful to leave her trust, was burned to a crisp on her nest. Charlie grieved much as he looked upon the remains of his hen, and counted over the eggs, the chickens from which he was hoping to have raised as late ones to winter, that he might send the earlier ones to the West Indies; but he consoled himself with the thought that his turnip-patch was spared, and growing finely.

All along the shore of the island the line of cliff was fringed with a mixed growth of white birch, maple, spruce, and red oak, contrasting beautifully with the ragged and perpendicular cliffs which had been spared by Ben as a shelter to the land from the easterly winds, and more than all for the beauty of their appearance. He took great delight in the spring, when pulling along the shore, in looking upon the masses of light-green foliage that covered the birches, and fell over the rocks.

These were now all consumed; and the rocks, shorn of moss, stood out white and naked in the sun. The willows and alders that fringed the brook

Hosted by Google

were gone; the trunks of the elms and that of the great maple scorched, and the grass all around the house black as a coal. All over the land were blackened stumps and stubs, from which the smoke rose, and among whose roots the fires were smouldering. The beauty of the landscape had vanished, and desolation came in its stead.

"Father," cried Charlie, moved almost to tears as he gazed upon the scene, "will my maple die, and the elms, and the great yellow birch at the brook, mother thinks so much of?"

"No, Charlie, they are only singed on the outside; there was not power enough in burning grass to heat the roots, as though they had stood in the woods among the brush; and the trees on the bank will be replaced by others, and perhaps handsomer ones."

They now went to rolling and piling; in anticipation of this Sally had made them two suits apiece of tow-cloth, which they wore without shirts. The fire had not consumed the bodies of many of the large trees: some of these they used to make the fence of; the rest they cut up and hauled together with the oxen, and piled them up in great piles, and set them on fire, till they consumed the whole. As they were compelled to put

Hosted by Google

their shoulders and breasts against these logs to roll them up, they were covered with smut from head to foot. They could not sit down in a chair without smutting it all over; and their faces were in streaks of white and black, where the perspiration ran down and washed away the smut. So, when they came to their meals, they just took off their tow suits, and got into the brook and washed themselves, and then washed their clothes, and spread them in the sun to dry, and put on another suit; part of the time they took their dinner in the field. Rover followed them round, rooting under the stumps for worms, and once in a while would shove his nose on a hot coal, which would make him run away squealing.

This smutty and laborious job being over, land fenced, and logs burned up, Ben sowed half of it with winter rye, reserving the other to plant with corn in the spring.

The grain must now in some way be covered; but Ben had no harrow to cover it with; besides, the ground was dotted with stumps, whose great roots stuck out in every direction, and no common harrow would have worked. He cut down a scrubby spruce, and trimming off the limbs within six or eight inches of the trunk, sharpened the points

Hosted by Google

of them; he then hitched the oxen to this hedge-hog, as he called it, and hauled it over the ground, thus scratching the earth over the grain. When Charlie saw this, he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"I should think it was a hedge-hog," said he; "I wonder what the steward of his highness the Duke of Bedford would say to that."

"It will do better work here than any harrow in England, for all that," said Ben.

There were many places where the hedge-hog could not go close to the stumps, because the large spur roots rolled it off: around these Charlie hacked the grain in with a hoe.

Ben now went over to his father's, and got all the chaff he could find in the barn, which was full of grass-seed, and sowed it on the rye.

It was now getting to be autumn. Ben and Charlie went off in the large canoe, and caught and cured fish to last them through the winter, and, getting a scow, brought on hay enough to winter their stock.

Sally, rapidly recovering under the careful nursing of her mother, was in a few days able to be about the house, and by the time the rye, which was sown on the burn, was well up, had recovered.

Hosted by Google

The first thing she did was to go and see the grain, with which she was so delighted, that she declared she would be willing to be burned again for such a field of grain as that.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XV.

FITTING AWAY.

It was now the month of September, and time to think of getting ready for sea. Captain Rhines came on to the island, and with him John Strout, who had closed up his fishing, and was to be first mate; Seth Warren, who was second mate; and Joe Griffin and Robert Yelf, who were to go before the mast. The first thing they did was to take the anchor the pirates left on the beach, carry it out and drop it astern, to hold her when she should float, though it must be confessed she did not have much more the appearance of floating than a basket. They then built a breastwork of logs on the beach, and above the tide, reaching to the bow of their craft, to run the boards on. They next hewed out some sticks long enough to go across the vessel, and bolt to the frames, both to hold her together and bind the cargo. As they were cutting these they came across a very large pine.

"Halloo, Ben!" cried Joe; "thought you had

Hosted by Google

taken an oath that you would never live another spring without a gunning float."

"So I have."

"Well, here's the tree to make a bunkum one, I tell you; shall I cut it for you?"

"Yes."

At first, they could only work at low water, as the tide ebbed and flowed in their craft. Captain Rhines and Ben stowed the boards, while the others ran them in. They arranged them with great care, that the joints might not all come in one place; and frequently put in a stick of cedar to increase the buoyancy, as cedar, in addition to its lightness, soaks water very slowly.

The tide now began to make. As they did not wish their timber to float in the vessel, and get out of place, they put shores under the deck beams to keep it from rising, and piled rocks on it: in a short time it was all out of sight, under water. They employed the rest of the day in piling boards on the breastwork, that they might be near at hand.

The next day they were able to go to work much sooner, and, the timber being near, made much more rapid progress; the next day more still; and, as they rose above the tide, put in more cedar to increase the buoyancy. They now put in their cross-

Hosted by Google

ties, and bolted them to the timbers, and when the tide made she floated, so that the boards were several feet above water and the top all dry.

The next morning Joe Griffin, after scratching his head a while, suddenly exclaimed, "Look here, neighbors: I don't pretend to be any great of a sailor man, but I reckon I know how to handle timber, and put it where I want it — I do. I can plank this stage over, run it a little farther aft, and take the oxen and twitch more lumber into this vessel in an hour than you can put in in this way in half a day. I suppose the oxen might leave their cards, but I don't 'spose that would kill anybody."

"Good on your head, Joe," said Captain Rhines; "let's see you do it."

The bow of the craft, a few feet aft of the foremast, was close timbered, as in ordinary boats; but from that to the mainmast was a hole large enough to drive in three yoke of oxen abreast. They lengthened their breastwork a little, hauled the craft alongside of it, and made a stage of plank. The others laid the boards in twitches, and were all ready to hook the chain when Joe came for his boards; and he hauled them into the vessel at a great rate, and dropped them just where Captain Rhines and Ben wanted them.

Hosted by Google

"Every man to his business," said Ben; "I never heard of that way of loading boards before."

She was now half full. Captain Rhines then put into her a number of tight and strong empty hogsheads and barrels, and stowed the boards on top of them. The effect of this was very quickly visible; she began to act like a vessel, — to rise and fall with the swell of the sea, and to be quite lively.

"That tells the story," said the captain; "we'll give her a few more; there's nothing like an empty cask; I'll find a use for them when we get out there."

"I wouldn't have believed it," said Joe; "why didn't you put them way down in the bottom of her, and fill her floor? she would have floated as light as a feather."

"If I had," replied the captain, "she would have done like the boy who went in swimming with the bladders."

"How was that?"

"A boy had heard tell that bladders would float a person, and thought he would walk on the water with them; so he went down to the pond, tied the bladders on to his feet, and waded into the water: they found him, a few hours afterwards, feet up and

Hosted by Google

head down, as dead as a herring; and that would have been the way with our craft."

"What an ass I am!" said Joe; "ain't I?"

"No; but you didn't happen to think of that."

"Joe," said Ben, one night after work, "can you make a float?"

"No."

"Then I'm all ashore. I've been thinking that, after you came back, you and I could make one before the kitchen fire this winter."

"I tell you, though it seems to be a very simple thing, there's a great knack in making a float. I can make a hog's trough, and christen it a float, but to make one that will be stiff and light, and scull steady and true, there's only one man round here can do it."

"Who's that?"

"Uncle Sam Elwell."

"Uncle Sam!" replied Ben, in amazement; "I didn't know he could work in anything but rocks."

"It's my opinion that he can work in anything he has a mind to; but he won't touch anything but rocks, except it is a float or a gun-stock. He will make as neat a gun-stock as ever a man put to his face, or a snow-shoe; but if he wanted a door made to a pig-sty or a hen house, he would go and build

Hosted by Google

wall for Uncle Isaac, while he made them for him; or if his wife wanted a chopping-tray or a bread-trough, she might want it till she could get Uncle Isaac to make it for her. Whatever he wants for hunting or fishing, he'll find a way to make, fast enough; it's my solid belief he'd make a gun-barrel if he couldn't get one in any other way."

"Do you think he would come over here in the winter, and make a float?"

"To be sure he would; he is doing nothing in the winter but taking care of his cattle; and there's not a calm day but he and Uncle Isaac are out in their float after game. Why, I've known them old critters, when they wanted to be in a certain place at half tide to shoot harvest ducks, to lie down on the beach in the night and go to sleep, till the water flowed up around their knees and woke them up."

"We'll hew it out, at any rate; that'll save him some work."

"I wouldn't; he's a particular old toad, and would rather have it just as it grew; but if you touch it, he'll think you've taken off some where you ought not to, and spilte it; he'll no more thank you for saving him labor on a float-piece, than a feller would thank you for courting a girl for him; he'd rather do it himself."

Hosted by Google

Ben sent word to Uncle Sam, who replied that same day, that when he and Isaac were out gunning they would come and look at it.

"Didn't I tell you so?" said Joe. "I wager my head that they'll both of them come over here and make it: what a good time they will have puttering over it, and passing their compliments upon each other! It's my opinion, that when them old men die they won't be buried with their wives, but alongside of each other. Uncle Isaac thinks so highly of the Indians, I expect he believes as they do, and thinks that he and Sam will go hunting in the other world."

They now made sail, and ran her over into Captain Rhines's cove, and came to anchor. They found upon trial, that although she was clumsy in working, she minded her helm, and sailed beyond their most sanguine expectations.

"I declare, Ben!" said Captain Rhines; "who would have thought she would go through the water so; we've got her sparred just right, if we did do it by guess. She's like old Aunt Molly Bradish — better than she looks."

They now took on board some spare spars, and Captain Rhines took a large barrel of oil.

"Heavens!" said Joe Griffin; "the old man

Hosted by Google

calculates on a long voyage, if he expects to burn all that."

The Ark, as they called her, was most appropriately named, both in respect to her proportions and her cargo. Captain Rhines had resorted to a custom common in those days. He gave his crew merely nominal wages, — four dollars a month, — and the mates in proportion; but, in addition to this, he gave them a "privilege," as it was called; that is, a certain space to carry whatever they liked, to sell in the West Indies. Produce was not carried there from all parts of the world in those days, as at present; and a barrel or two of onions or beets would bring twenty-five or thirty dollars. Live stock also brought a great price, although they were very apt to be lost on the passage. Captain Rhines carried candles for his "venture," as it was called; John Strout, horses; Charlie sent hens, baskets, and turnips as freight.

In the morning, when they were all fed, there was such a cackling of hens, bleating of sheep, and all kinds of noises, as was really quite wonderful.

A great many people came from all parts to look at her, and many and various were the criticisms. Some thought she would never get there; more

Hosted by Google

thought she would; but all agreed in this — that if anybody in the world could get her there, it was Captain Ben Rhines. Uncle Isaac's judgment was greatly respected by all.

"Mr. Murch," said Isaac Pettigrew, "you don't seem to be at all consarned, though your nephew is going in her. What makes you so easy?"

"Because," replied he, "a lucky man is master."

One night, as the captain and his family were at the supper-table, there came in a negro, very black, and of truly vast proportions, whom Captain Rhines addressed by the singular appellation of Flour. This nickname he obtained in this manner. He was a man of great strength, and a thorough seaman, but he often shipped as cook, because he had higher wages; and a most excellent cook he was: he was also perfectly honest, and, like most very powerful men, of an excellent disposition; but he would get drunk whenever the opportunity offered, insomuch that they often put him in jail, and locked him up till the vessel was ready for sea. Sometimes he would stay ashore for a year or two, and then get tired and start off. He was always in demand, notwithstanding this failing, — the economical captains never hesitating to go one hand short when they had Flour (alias James Peterson) for

Hosted by Google

cook, as he was always ready to lend a hand, and was worth three common men in bad weather.

Some roguish boys, one day when he had been drinking, got him into a store, and putting molasses on his wool, covered it with flour, putting a layer of flour and molasses till his head was as big as a half bushel. After this he went by the name of Flour, and answered to it as readily as to his own name, that dropping out of use entirely.

He was a slave, while slaves were held in New England, and had been many voyages with Captain Rhines, who used to hire him of Peterson, his master, to whom he was so much attached that he would never leave him, although he had every opportunity to run away when at sea; and not even the love of liquor could prevent him from bringing home a present for his master.

"Massa cap'n," said the black, "dey tells me you's gwine to sail the salt seas again. Massa, if you is goin', this nigger would like to go wid you."

"Well, we've been a good many cruises together. Wife, give Flour some supper, and then we'll talk it over. I suppose," said the captain, after supper, "you've got dry, and want some of that auger-dent* the Spanish make. It's fiery stuff, and will

* Aguardiente.

Hosted by Google

burn your coppers all up; you had better drink old West India. Wife, give him a glass of that Santa Cruz."

"Thank you, massa cap'n."

"But I ain't going to give much of any wages; they are going to have a 'privilege' — mates and all. I tell you, we are like old Noah; we've got cattle, and feathered fowl, beasts clean and unclean."

"Massa, me have privilege, too."

"What have you got to carry?"

"Me got an onion patch, massa, — my ole woman raise him; got some bayberry taller, — Spaniards buy him quick to put in de candle; make him hard so he no melt. Me talk Spanish all same as one Spaniard; me tell 'em all about it."

"But how will you get back? I am going to sell the craft."

"O, massa, you know I good sailor man; you give me what you call recommend, I get a chance in some ship to go somewhere — don't care where; my ole woman so debilish ugly me no want to come back. Last Monday mornin' she break de skillet; she kill my dog; she put thistle under my horse's tail when I goes to de store, so he fling me over his head — most break my neck."

"Perhaps she thought you went to the store too often. And what did you do to her?"

Hosted by Google

"I beat her with the well-pole. When we were slaves to ole massa she well enough; but since freedom came I no live with her — she no mind me at all."

"Well, Flour, I give the men four dollars a month, and their privilege. I'll give you six, and your grog, and all the privilege you want; but I shall expect you to lend us a hand in bad weather, and perhaps take the helm, for there's not a man in the vessel can steer in bad weather as you."

"O, massa, you know this darky; he no be de last man when de watch is called."

They were now all ready for sea, only waiting for a fair wind, and enough of it.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XVI.

A WELL-DESERVED HOLIDAY.

SABBATH morning, after a rainy day and night, Charlie waking up, and looking, as he usually did the first thing, in the direction of Captain Rhines's, missed the great bulk of the Ark, which before seemed to fill up the whole cove. The wind was north-west, and blowing a gale.

"Father," he shouted, "the Ark is gone! I can't see her at all."

"Well," replied Ben, "she has got a wind that will shove her over the gulf."

On the summit of the middle ridge stood the tallest tree on the island, with an eagle's nest on it. Beside it grew a large spruce, whose top reached to its lower limbs, and next to the spruce a scrub hemlock, whose lower limbs came almost to the ground. Charlie had made a bridge of poles from the spruce to the pine, and used to sit there, when the wind blew, till the tree shook so much that it frightened him, or the eagles came to their nest;

Hosted by Google

but, after a while, they became so accustomed to him as to take fish from the limbs where he placed it. You could step from the ground to the hemlock, from that to the spruce, and from the spruce walk on the bridge to the pine. To this they went with the glass, saw the masts of the Ark just going out of sight, and watched them till they were lost in the distance.

It was impossible, now that the bustle and excitement of fitting away was over, for Ben to be otherwise than anxious respecting the result of this venture, and the safety of his father and friends in so strange a craft. But he kept his thoughts and misgivings (if he had any) to himself, though he afterwards said that it was the longest Sabbath he ever spent.

At night, after Charlie had gone to bed, Sally asked Ben what he was going about. He replied, to hew a barn frame; that, as he was going to raise crops, he must have some place to put them.

"I suppose you can do that kind of work alone, well enough?"

"Yes."

"While it is pleasant weather, I would give Charlie a holiday, and let him ask John and Fred

Hosted by Google

Williams to come over here; it would please him very much, and I really think he deserves it."

"So do I. I'll tell him in the morning that he may go over and get them. They say there isn't a better behaved, smarter boy in town than Fred Williams, for all he was such a scape-grace a few months ago."

"I'll tell him to-night, and then he can go as soon as he likes."

She woke up Charlie, and told him the good news, which kept him awake a long time, laying plans for the amusement of his company. The next morning he set off betimes, arriving at Captain Rhines's just as they were sitting down to breakfast, where he received a hearty welcome.

When John heard that he had come to invite him and Fred to spend a week on the island, he could no longer contain himself. He clapped his hands, and unable to find language to express his delight, hugged every one at the table, and finished by hugging Tige.

"O, mother! only see Tige," who, participating in the unusual joy, was frisking round the room, and wagging his tail; "I declare if I had a tail I'd wag it, too. Don't you wish you was going?"

"I'll invite him," said Charlie; and, taking him

Hosted by Google

by the paw, he said, "Tige Rhines, Mr. Benjamin Rhines, wife, and baby invite you to make them a visit, with John and Fred Williams."

"Mother, he knows what it means, and is as glad as I am; see, he is going to roll."

After rolling over, he remained a few moments on his back, his paws stuck up in the air, apparently in joyous meditation. As this was Tige's method of manifesting the very acme of happiness, we are bound to suppose, with John, that he knew what was in store for him.

"John, I can't spare Tige; he is my protector when your father is gone; and we need him, too, now that the fruit is ripe, to watch the orchard, and also to get the cows for us."

The boys now set off for Fred, whom they found in the mill, taking charge, as his father was gone; but at noon he would return, and might let him go, though it was doubtful, as they were very busy indeed in the mill; and the tears almost stood in his eyes as he said so.

The boys looked at the mill, and helped Fred a while, and then caught fish in the mill-pond; for it was a tide-mill, though there was a brook ran into it. When the gates were open, and the tide from the sea flowed in, the fish — smelts, tom-cod, and

Hosted by Google

sometimes small mackerel, called "tinkers," came with it. When tired of fishing they went to look at the ducks. Fred had nearly a hundred ducks, that spent the greater part of their time in the mill-pond. Never did ducks have a better time than Fred's; they had plenty of corn from the mill, and when the pond was full they fed upon the insects and little fish that live in the salt water; but when the pond became low they resorted to the brook.

About a quarter of a mile up this little stream was a place where some windfalls had partially dammed the water, forming a little pond, in which were myriads of frogs, tadpoles, polliwogs, and turtles of all sizes. It was a great amusement to the boys to see them, as the pond diminished, preparing to go up the brook, each old duck followed by her own family. Being of many different colors, their glossy heads and backs shining in the sun as they sailed up in regular order to give battle to the frogs, they looked gay indeed. Charlie caught two of the small turtles to take home with him.

At noon, when Mr. Williams came home, he received the boys very kindly, and told them he was glad to have Fred go with them, as he had been a good boy, and worked nobly all summer, and that he might stay as long as they wanted him to. He

Hosted by Google

then invited them to stop and dine with Fred. As for Tige, little Fannie took him under her special care, and shared her dinner with him.

As they were going along Fred said to John, "This is the very line I carried the day I played truant, and stuck the hook in me. How much better I feel now than I did then. In those days I used to come sneaking home at night with a guilty conscience, and the fear of being found out spoilt all the comfort; but I tell you I felt about right to-day, and couldn't help thinking of it when father praised me up so much before you, and was so willing to spare me, though he will have to work very hard while I'm gone."

"I never disobeyed my father," replied John, "because I never wanted to; but I've often done wrong, and if every boy feels as bad as I do about it, there can't be much comfort in it."

"I don't believe," said Charlie, "that boys who have nothing to do but play are as happy as we that work, for, when we get a holiday, we enjoy more in one hour than they do in a week."

"I am glad," continued Fred, "that I took up with Uncle Isaac's advice, and staid at home, for, had I gone to Salem, I should probably have found other companions as bad as Pete Clash, and, being

Hosted by Google

away from all restraint, been worse than ever, and perhaps have come to the gallows."

"It's too late to do much to-night," said Charlie, as they landed; "let's go up to the great maple, and talk and lay plans. You've never seen the great maple — have you, Fred?"

"No; you know I never was on here, only in the winter, when everything was frozen up, and covered with snow."

Going along, they came to the two great trees which were connected by a common root, making a natural bridge across the brook, which, above them, widened out into a little basin.

"What a nice place this would be to keep ducks!" said Fred; "they could swim in the cove, and, when the tide was out, come into this little basin, and go clear to the head of the brook."

"I have often thought of it; but it takes a good deal to winter ducks, and we have to buy all our corn, both for ourselves and the hens. But we are going to plant a piece of corn in the spring, and then, perhaps, father will let me keep them."

"I'll give you a duck in the spring that wants to set, and eggs to put under her."

"Thank you, Fred."

"I think it's real nice to see them play in the

Hosted by Google

water; and, when one gets a bug, the others swim after, and try to get it away from him, and all going one right after the other to the pond in the morning."

Although Fred had grown up in a new country, he yet gazed with wonder upon the great maple. It was indeed a kingly tree, thirteen feet and a half in circumference at the roots, bearing its enormous coronal of leaves in that symmetry of proportions which this tree (seen nowhere in its perfection but in the North American forests) sometimes exhibits.

"What is that, Charlie, on that lower limb?" asked John.

"That's the baby-house."

In the spring, at the time boys make whistles, Charlie had peeled the bark from some willow rods (which he called whitening the sallies), and made a long, narrow basket. He then worked an ornamental rim round it, and put strong handles in each end, and hung it to one of the lower limbs of the great tree. Sally made a little bed-tick and pillow, which Charlie stuffed with the down of the cat-tail (cooper's) flag. Here the baby would sit and swing, and play with things that Charlie gave him, while he sat beneath and made whistles, or played with Rover; or if he wanted the little one to go to

Hosted by Google

sleep, would pull a string that was fastened to the branch, and rock him to rest. In the absence of companions of his own age, the tree was like a brother to Charlie; and sometimes, as he sat listening to the wind among the leaves, he almost fancied it could talk. Here was his workshop, where he made everything that could be made with a knife or hatchet, and at every leisure moment he slipped off and ran to the tree.

Going round to the north-west side of it, they found a building about seven feet high, and shingled on the roof and walls, with a tight-fitting door, having a wooden latch and hinges. Opening the door, they saw that it had a regular frame, and was ceiled up with planed boards. There were two drawers in it, and above them were shelves. The drawers not being as deep as the closet, left a space of six inches in front. On one side was Charlie's gun, and on the other his powder-horn and shot-pouch. On the edge of the top shelf was a squirrel stuffed, sitting up with his tail over his back, just as natural as life.

"How did you make that look so natural? and how did you fix the tail so?" asked Fred.

"I put a wire in it, and bent it to suit me."

"But the head; it is exactly the right shape."

Hosted by Google

"Well, I took the head out of the skin, and got the meat all off of it, and put the skull back again, and stuffed in wool enough to fill up between the skull and skin, where I had taken off the flesh."

On a little shelf by itself, made of apple-tree wood, oiled and polished, and upon which Charlie had evidently bestowed a great deal of labor, was the Bible his mother had given him.

They now opened the drawers. The first one opened was filled with all kinds of boys' play-things, which Charlie had made himself, — whistles, fifes, and squirt-guns made of elder, and a ball.

"What a neat ball that is," said Fred, "and how well it is covered! Did you cover it, Charlie?"

"Yes."

"Will it bounce well?"

"Try it."

Fred threw it down on the flat stone, when it went way up over his head into the tree.

"My jingoes! I never saw a ball bounce like that. What is it made of?"

"Yarn."

"But what is there in it? What's it wound on?"

"That's telling; guess."

"On a piece of cork?"

"No."

Hosted by Google

"On horse hair?"

"No; guess again."

"I can't guess."

"Will you give it up?"

"Yes."

"It's wound on a sturgeon's nose."

"That's a likely story!" exclaimed both boys in a breath. "Is it now — honest?"

"Yes."

"Where did you get a sturgeon's nose?"

"They caught one at the mill; father and I were there with logs, and I got his nose."

"How did you know it would make a ball bounce?"

"I learned it of the boys in Nova Scotia."

"What a feller you are to make things! I wish I could; I'd have lots of things. I couldn't cover a ball as neat as that to save my life. I wish I had lived on an island, and had to make things; perhaps I might have learned something."

"I'll give you that ball, Fred."

"'Twould be too bad to take it from you, after you have taken so much pains to make it."

"I can make another. I take lots of comfort sitting under this tree making things; besides, I've

Hosted by Google

nobody to play with me, and there's not much fun playing ball alone."

They opened another drawer (which had two small ones — one beneath the other — at one end), but there was nothing in it, except a bow and arrows, some of which had iron points.

"What a splendid bow!" said John; "how stiff it is! and what handsome arrows! What is it made of?"

"Hornbeam."

"I never saw a bow made of that; we boys make them of ash, walnut, or hemlock."

"Uncle Isaac told me to make it of that; perhaps that's what the Indians make them of. In our country they make them of yew."

They opened the little drawers, but they were empty.

"Why don't you keep something in these drawers?"

"I'm saving them for my tools; that is, when I get any money to buy them."

"That reminds me," said Fred, "that I have brought with me all the money that the baskets sold for; and now we will settle up the affairs of our company."

He pulled a paper from his pocket, which

Hosted by Google

contained an account of the number of baskets he and John had made, and the result of the sale.

Charlie then took from his drawer a book, the leaves of which were made of birch bark, in which was the account of all he had made, and delivered to them. Part of them had been sold at the store for half money and half in goods. Charlie wished to share equally, but to that the others would not consent, because they said that he had made the greater part of the baskets, and also taught them the trade. Charlie's part of the proceeds amounted to ten dollars in money, besides his credit at the store. He had never before, in all his life, been in possession of so much money, and, overjoyed, ran to tell his mother.

"Now, Charlie," said she, "do you use that money to buy things that you want and need, and don't go to buying pigs, and spending it for us or the baby."

"I'll have a knife," said Charlie, "at any rate, and then I shan't have to be all the time borrowing father's, or using a butcher's knife. I'll have some tools, too, to put in my drawers; but I think I ought to help father pay for the island; I think it's dreadful to pay rent."

Hosted by Google

"Never mind that, Charlie; Ben can pay for the island fast enough."

"Mother, you don't know how many things I've thought about, while I've been sitting under the old maple this summer, that I would make for you to have in the house, when I got my money for the baskets, and could get some tools of my own. Mother, you don't know how glad I am we have got just such a house as we have, where there's no end of things to make, and things to do; also, a barn to build, the land to clear, and the house to finish. Now, if all this was done, there would be no fun — nothing new to look forward to; one day would be just like another. You couldn't look at things after you'd made them, and say, That is my work; I took it out of the rough; that's mine, for I made it; but, however nice it might look, you'd have to think it was somebody's else wit and grit did it. That would take all the good out of it for me. I'm sure I think more of my canoe than I should of ever so nice a one that anybody made and gave me."

"That is true, Charlie," said Sally, delighted with sentiments so much in accordance with her own feelings. "I'm sure, if we had sheep, and flax, and pasturage, and I had a loom, and the house full of

Hosted by Google

blankets, and sheets, and nice things, all given to us, I shouldn't be half so happy as I am in trying to get them. I tell you, Charlie, the more you have to do, the more you can do. There's nothing like having something ahead to make you work, and stick to it."

"Yes, mother; it makes a fellow spit on his hands and hold on. I know that's so; because, sometimes I want Rover to go to the woods, and he won't; I switch him, and he won't; I push him, and he won't; then I put some acorns in my pocket and run ahead, and he'll get there as soon as I do."

When he returned to the boys he said, "I'll bet that if you do shoot with a gun better than I, that I can beat you both with a bow. I can hit a mark at twenty yards with this bow, oftener than you can at thirty with your guns. I'll bet you the bow and arrows against two gun-flints and two charges of powder, that I do it."

"I'll stand you," cried John; "I can beat you with my eyes shut. What's the use of talking about a bow in the same day with a gun?"

They measured the distance, and set up a mark, when, to their astonishment, Charlie beat them both.

"You thought, John, the first time we ever saw

Hosted by Google

each other," said Charlie, "that I had a great many things to learn; you'll find you have some things to learn, too."

"I was a fool, Charlie; I believe you have forgot more than ever I knew; but how did you learn to shoot so with a bow?"

"Why, in England, boys and men practise a great deal with a bow; and they have shooting matches on the holidays, and give prizes to the best marksmen. My grandfather was a bowman in the king's service; when he was young they used to fight with bows and arrows. I wish you could see his bow and arrows, that he had in the wars; the bow was six feet long, and the arrows would go through a man. Since I've been here I've practised a great deal, because I didn't have money to buy powder and shot. I can shoot a coot or a squirrel with an arrow, or any kind of sea-bird."

"We'll have bows, and practise," said John.

"I'll give you this one, and make Fred one, too. I like to make bows."

"Thank you, Charlie; and when we get learned we'll come on here and give it to the squawks, and go on to Oak Island, and shoot squirrels and woodchucks, and save our powder and shot for sea-fowl. Have we seen all your things, Charlie?"

Hosted by Google

"Not by a long chalk; look up there" (pointing up into the tree). Following the direction of his fingers, they saw in the top of the tree a platform. Charlie took down a little ladder which hung on the tree, by which they ascended to its lower limbs. When they came down John proposed that they should camp out that night in the woods.

"I should think," said Charlie, "it would be a great deal more comfortable to sleep in a bed."

"*Comfortable!* who wants to be comfortable; we can be comfortable any time."

At supper John broached the matter, and asked Sally to let them have some blankets.

"I wouldn't do that," said she; "you'll get your death's cold, and your folks won't like it."

"Let them have the clothes," said Ben; "we've invited them here to have a holiday; let them spend it in their own fashion; it will taste the sweeter."

As they passed the maple on their way to the woods, John suddenly exclaimed, "What say, boys, for camping in the top of the tree? it will be grand to lie there, hear the wind blow, feel the tree rock, and listen to the surf in the night."

"What if it should storm?" said Charlie.

"It can't storm; see how clear it is; and the wind is north-west — yes, and west of that."

Hosted by Google

"What if we should fall out?"

"We will lash ourselves in."

Tying the blankets to a line, they hoisted them up. They went to the beach, and picking up some dry eel-grass, spread it over the platform for a bed, and covered it with the sail of Ben's canoe.

John fastened them all in with ropes, and then fastened himself. Charlie slept in the middle; they cuddled up together, and were as warm as toast. The trees on the island had already parted with most of their leaves, but the maple, standing in a sheltered spot, retained its foliage.

The limbs of the great tree swayed gently in the westerly breeze, and the moonbeams came slanting through them most delightfully, as the boys lay listening to the moan of the night wind, the sound of the surf along the shore, and watched the clouds as they coursed by the moon, all heightened by the novelty of their situation.

"I'm glad we did it," said Charlie; "I had no idea it would be so nice."

Fred wished he could be a bird, and always live in the tree-tops. The swaying of the branches communicated to their couch a motion exceedingly pleasant, which, rousing a long-slumbering association in Charlie's mind, he struck up the old ditty, —

Hosted by Google

"Hushaby, baby, on the tree-top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock," &c.

But after twelve o'clock the wind changed to south-east; clouds obscured the moon; and, while the boys were quietly sleeping, a gust of wind struck the tree, covering them with showers of leaves, while the rain dashed in sheets upon their faces. Waking in alarm, they found themselves enveloped in midnight darkness, pelted with rain, and their couch quivering in the gale. Covering their heads with the bed-clothes, they took counsel in the emergency. Fred and Charlie were alarmed and anxious, but John, whose spirits always rose with danger, seemed very much at his ease.

"What shall we do?" said Fred.

"Stay where we are," replied John; "at any rate till the blankets wet through."

But the rain came down in torrents, and it soon began to run in under and over them.

"We can't stay here," said Charlie; let's go to the house."

"I won't," replied John; "Ben will laugh at us, and Sally will say, 'Didn't I tell you so.'"

"Charlie, have you got the flint, steel, and matches?"

"Yes."

Hosted by Google

"Do you know of any hollow tree?"

"Yes; a great big one, all dead."

"Could you find it in the dark?"

"Yes; I can go right to it."

They found the tree, dark as it was, for Charlie knew it stood in the corner of the log fence, and followed the fence till he came to it. It was an enormous pine, completely dead, and with a hollow in it large enough to hold the whole of them. It stood among a growth of old hemlocks, whose foliage was so dense, — the lower limbs drooping almost to the earth, — that they shed the rain, and the ground under them was but slightly wet.

"This is the place," said John, in high glee; "we'll have the hemlock to make a fire under, and the old pine for our bedroom."

He got into the tree, and scraping some dry splinters from the inside of it, struck fire with his flint and steel, and kindled them. It was not John's design to build his fire in the old pine, only to kindle it there, because it was a dry place. He now took the blazing wood up, and put it on the ground under the hemlocks, and the rest fed the flame with dry pieces torn from the inside of the pine, till they had a bright blaze. By this light they stripped bark from the birches, picked up pitch

Hosted by Google

knots, and dragged dead branches, which, though wet on the outside, the fire was now hot enough to burn. They now threw themselves upon the ground, which was thoroughly dried by the tremendous heat.

"A maple is a beautiful tree to look at," said John; "but give me an old hemlock for a rain-storm, and to build a fire under."

Charlie, to whom such scenes were altogether new, was in raptures.

"I didn't know before," he said, "that you could make a fire in the woods in a rain-storm. I never saw any woods till I came to this country, and don't know anything about such things as you and Fred, that have been brought up in them."

"There are always places," replied John, "in thick forests, — hollow trees, the north-west side of logs, and in hollow logs, where the wet never gets: in those places you can always find dry stuff, and, when you get a hot fire, wet or green wood will burn."

"It seems so wild and independent; no dukes, and earls, and gamekeepers to watch you, but just go where you please, kill and eat. We will go some time, and do what we were telling about, — live wild, — won't we, John?"

Hosted by Google

"Yes; after father gets home. You get Uncle Isaac to tell you about how the Indians do, and I will, too."

"Yes; and I shall learn to shoot better with a gun by that time, and you will learn to shoot with a bow. I tell you what, I like to contrive and make shifts, and get along so, better than I do to have everything to do with, or have everything done for me. I'm such a fool, I expect I shall hate to give up my birch-bark sail when I get a good one."

"So do I. Ben is the greatest for that, and so is father; you can't get either of them in so tight a place that they can't get out of it. It seems to come natural to them to contrive; they don't have to stop and think about it, like other folks do."

"That's so. The other day father was going over to the main land, and mother wanted him to look well, and she had no flat-iron to iron a fine shirt; so she wanted him to take it to your mother and get her to iron it; but he got a square glass bottle, and filled it full of hot water, and she ironed it first rate with that."

"There's another thing I like," said John; "I like to go to new places; I should like to go to a strange place every day; I should like to go all over the world."

Hosted by Google

"I don't; when I find a place I like, I want to stay there; and the longer I stay the better I like it; it seems as if I liked the very ground."

"I think we've had a splendid time," said Fred.

"We had a good time in the tree while it lasted, and now I don't see how we could have any better time than we are having here."

"Yes," replied John; "the ducking coming in between is just what puts the touch on. Now let's go to sleep in the old stub."

They cleaned out the rotten wood, put in some brush to lie on, built the fire so near to it that the heat from it would keep them warm, and were soon fast asleep. When they awoke the fire was still burning, and the tempest had abated, though it was still raining heavily. Making their way to the house, they met Ben coming in quest of them.

"I should think," said he, "that you had crept into a hollow log, by the looks of your jackets."

While eating their breakfasts they detailed the night's adventures.

"I'm glad," said Sally, "I didn't know you were in the top of that tree; I shouldn't have slept a wink if I had; it must be curious fun to leave a good warm bed and sleep in the top of a tree this time of year. I don't see what put that in your

Hosted by Google

heads; that's some of John's work, I know. I don't believe but, if you would own the truth, you wished yourselves snug in bed when the squall struck."

"You've been out in the rain enough for once," said Ben; "I shan't let you go out again till it's done raining. I think you had better go to bed and finish your nap."

"We are all here together," said Charlie, "and can't do anything else; let's make some baskets; 'twill be money in our pockets, for we have none on hand; I've got stuff in the house all pounded."

They made a fire in the great fireplace, and sitting around it, made baskets, and laid new plans. At noon the weather cleared; but after eating a hearty dinner, and the fatigue and excitement of the night's adventure, the boys felt but little inclined to engage in anything that required active exertion. They lolled on the grass a while, and at length Charlie proposed that they should go a fishing. The tides being very high, the water had flowed up to the fissure in the ledge where the brook ran over. A whole school of smelts and tom-cods, taking advantage of this, had come up with the tide, and the mouth of the brook was full of them. After fishing a while, Fred Williams tied his hand-

Hosted by Google

kerchief to four sticks, and putting some bait in it, and a stone to sink it, fastened a line to each corner, and let it down into the water. The smelts going in to eat the bait, he gradually drew it up, and, when almost at the surface, gave a quick jerk; but the water was so long filtering through the handkerchief that they all swam out.

"I can fix them, I know," said Charlie.

He got a bushel basket, and took out small pieces of the filling to make it a little more open, put in bait, and sunk it. After the fish were in he drew it slowly up. The basket being deep, and the fish well to the bottom, they did not take alarm until the rim was almost at the top of the water. Charles then jerked it out, when the water ran through the open basket so quickly, that, unable to escape, they were caught. When satisfied with this sport, they selected the largest for their supper, and Charles gave the rest to his hens.

When they awoke the next morning the sun was shining in their faces, and coming down stairs they were astonished to find it was nine o'clock, and that Ben had eaten his breakfast, and gone to work in the woods.

"Well, boys," said Sally, "which do you like the best, the tree top, the pine stub, or the bed up stairs?"

Hosted by Google

"The bed up stairs is first rate," replied John, "as you may judge by the length of our nap; but the pine stub for me."

As they were eating and chatting, Ben came running in for his gun, saying there was a seal in the cove.

"O, do let me shoot him!" cried John, leaping from the table.

"I'm afraid you won't hit him; I want his skin and oil, for he's a bouncer."

"Yes, I will; do let me fire, Ben?"

Charlie had cut a scull-hole in his canoe, so that she could be used for gunning.

Getting into this, John sculled towards the creature, who kept swimming and diving. At length he fired. The water was instantly red with blood. John paddled with all his might, but the seal began to sink; catching up a flounder-spear, he endeavored to pierce him with it, but he had sunk out of reach. He instantly flung over the anchor, fastened an oar to it to mark the spot, and then paddled slowly back, with downcast looks.

"You have done well, John," said Ben, who saw he was mortified; "they will sink when you kill them outright. If we only had Tige here he would bring him up."

Hosted by Google

"I will dive and get him at low water."

At low water, John, diving down, brought up the seal. Neither of the other boys had ever seen one, except in the water. They regarded it with great interest, and volunteered, under John's direction, to skin it and obtain the fat, called blubber, from which a good oil is made.

"Only see, John," cried the two boys, "if he has not got whiskers just like a cat; and what funny legs; why, they are not legs; what are they?"

"We call them flippers," said Ben. He then showed them that there was a membrane between the toes of his feet, like a duck's. His hind legs were about as long as the thighs of a hog would be, if the legs were cut off at the gambrel joint. They cannot with these short legs walk much on the land, but are very active in the water. In the warm nights in summer they crawl out on the rocks, and lie and play, and you may hear them growling and whining like so many dogs; they also, in the winter time, lie on the ice cakes and float about, and when alarmed they slide into the water in an instant. When they are wounded severely, and are in the agonies of death, they will float till the gunners can get hold of them; but if they are killed outright they sink at once. Those who shoot them

Hosted by Google

generally have a spear, or hook, with which they sometimes catch them as they are going down, as John attempted to do. Ben also told them that the seals were so strong, that if you took hold of one of their paws when they were half dead, they would twist it out of your gripe with such force and quickness as to benumb the fingers. The fat or blubber of a seal lies in one sheet over the meat, about two inches in thickness, and not at all mixed with it, as is the case with other animals.

The boys removed the skin from this mass of fat, like lard, which was quite a difficult operation for novices, and required a great deal of care, that they might not cut the skin, or leave the fat upon it. When the skin was removed, there lay the fat in one mass, that trembled when they touched it. They next removed this in strips, leaving the carcass lean, and of a dark red. They now stretched the skin tight with nails on the door of the hovel to dry, and Sally, cutting the blubber into small pieces, put it on the fire to render. It made excellent oil to burn in lamps, and to sell; and the skin was used in those days to make caps, gloves, and boots for winter, also to cover trunks, and for many other uses.

Skinning the seal, and especially talking about it,

Hosted by Google

had consumed so much time, that they determined to devote what little of the day was left to playing ball, especially as Charlie was very fond of the sport, and seldom had any one to play with him. They persuaded Ben to make one of their number. The island being mostly forest, they had not a very large place in which to play, as part of that cleared was sown with winter rye, which had grown so much on the new, strong land, as to make it difficult to find the ball. Thus they were limited to a piece of ground, not of great extent, near the shore. The boys had bat-sticks, but Ben preferred to use his fist, with which he sent the ball whizzing through the air with great velocity. At length becoming excited with the game, he struck it with such force as to send it over the White Bull into the water. He then went to his work in the woods, leaving the boys to get their ball as they could. Not many moments elapsed before they were on board the canoe in hot pursuit. Pulling in the direction they had seen it go, they soon discovered it bobbing up and down on a breaker in the cave on the White Bull. The cave was formed by two rocky points, and the bottom of it was, near the shore, a smooth granite ledge; but across its mouth were ragged and broken reefs, two fathoms beneath the surface at the lowest

Hosted by Google

tides. Over these the great wave came in, filling the whole cave with a sheet of foam. In this breaker lay the ball; when the wave curled over and broke, it would come towards the shore and excite hope; then the recoil would carry it back again: thus it tantalized them.

"I'll have that ball," said Fred, who was a splendid swimmer, and as much at home in the water as a fish.

"It's impossible," said Charlie, "till there comes a northerly wind to blow the sea down, and a calm after it; then I've seen it so smooth you might go over it in a canoe, and I have been over it."

"But I'll swim in and get it."

"Swim in! The moment you get into that undertow, it will hold you, and carry you back and forth just as it is doing that ball. Why, I've seen a mill-log get in there and stay three or four days; and so it will carry you back and forth till you are worn out, or perish. I had rather make you a dozen balls than you should go in there."

"I tell you I *will* go in there and get that ball; I'll have a try for it, at any rate."

"No, you won't," said John; "for we are the strongest party, and we won't *let* you, if we have to tie you, or lay you down and pile rocks on you."

Hosted by Google

"I tell you I have a *plan*, if you would only *help* a fellow a little. Charlie gave me that ball, and it's all the present I ever had in my life; for nobody ever cared enough about me to give me anything before."

"Let's hear your plan."

"Can't you row up to the surf in the canoe? I will put a line round me and go *in;* then, if it *sucks* me *in*, you can pull me out."

"Well, Fred, we will do that, if we can find a line strong enough."

"I can get a new line," said Charlie, "that was left when they rigged the Ark."

There was no getting into the cave by its mouth, as it was entirely filled by the surf; so they hauled the canoe over the rock into the cave, rowed up, and anchored as near as they dared, to look at it. Every time the surf came in, which was about once in five minutes, it swept the ball towards them, where it remained a minute or two, and then the recoil of the wave drew it back. Fred, putting the line round him, flung himself into the water, which was spotted with patches of gray froth that the wind blew from the crest of the breaker. The resolute boy breasted the waves; but so far from being sucked in, he found it impossible to reach the spot

Hosted by Google

where the ball lay, and the suction began, by reason of the wind, which blew directly in his face, and the sea, that, beyond the influence of the breaker, drove directly to the shore; and, worn out with effort, he returned exhausted to the boat.

"*I* have got a plan," said Charlie, who, by this time, had become as much interested as Fred himself. "Let us make the line fast ashore, Fred sit in the stern and hold on to it, keeping his eye on the ball, and tell us where and how to row, and one or the other of us will catch it."

"Suppose," said John, "while he was watching the ball and us, he should happen to let the line slip, or couldn't hold it; then we should follow the ball right into the breaker."

"We will make the end fast to the head-board of the canoe; then it *can't* get away, and we can have it as well as he."

The boys now pulled up the grappling, holding the canoe stationary with their oars till the surf should come in to drive the ball towards them.

"Ready!" shouted Fred; "here it comes!"

"Ay, ay."

"Ready! Give way together!"

Away shot the canoe directly to the surf.

"Ease, Charlie; pull, John; steady together;

Hosted by Google

grab, Charlie! it's right under the bow, on your side."

Looking over his shoulder, Charlie caught sight of it; dropping his oar, he strove to grasp it; but the canoe, ceasing to feel the influence of his oar, sheered and went over it. The next time it was on John's side, but the result was the same; the canoe could not be kept stationary a moment without both oars.

"Pay out the line, Fred," said John; "let's go beyond it; I'll risk the surf."

Fred, who needed no prompting, did as he was ordered. Familiarity with danger had made them reckless. With set teeth and white lips they strained at the oars; the canoe stood almost on end, and the din was awful. At that moment the blade of John's oar struck the ball; feathering * his oar with a jerk, he sent it skipping over the water out of the eddy, where the wind drove it directly to the shore.

"Haul, Fred! haul for your life!" shouted he, for the canoe was now within the undertow, that set directly towards the breaker. Shipping their oars, they sat down in the bottom of the canoe, which now stood almost perpendicular, and bracing

* Turning it edgewise.

Hosted by Google

their feet against the knees that ran across the bottom, grasped the line, and united their efforts to those of Fred.

"Haul and hold!" cried John; "take a turn, Charlie!"

Charlie ran the end of the line through a hole in the head-board, and took in the slack. Slowly the canoe yielded to their efforts, as with desperate energy, they strained at the line, and began to recede from the surf. All at once the line slackened in their grasp.

"It's coming," cried John; "haul hand over hand; the breaker is after us."

There came a rush and a roar; they were covered with spray, and the canoe was half filled with water; but the surf had fallen short of them, and they were safe.

Trembling with excitement, and breathless with exertion, they gazed upon each other in silence as the canoe drifted back before the wind to the beach.

"I never will play with this ball again," said Fred, taking it from the water; "but I will keep it just as long as I live."

"You ought to, Fred," said John, "for we have risked our lives to get it."

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

GETTING THE BALL IN THE BREAKER. — Page 249.

Hosted by Google

Indeed, Charles and John had done as boys often do; after giving Fred good advice, and striving to prevent him from a perilous act, they had involved him and themselves in greater danger.

"I think, John, we had better not mention this matter at home; if we do, I'm afraid father will send you and Fred both home, and never let me have another holiday."

"We must go to the fire; we are wet with perspiration; and if I look as the rest of you do, they will know something is the matter, and question us."

"If they do, I shall tell the truth."

"Of course you will."

"We might do as we did before — make a fire in the woods."

"That's first rate; I never thought of that."

Youth soon recovers from fatigue; and after lying an hour stretched at full length before a warm fire, they felt entirely rested. Thoroughly dried, and recruited by rest, they now began to feel the pressing calls of appetite.

"I'm so hungry," said Fred; "I do wish it was supper time."

"It is almost," said Charlie; "and if we go home mother will hurry it up."

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XVII.

UNCLE ISAAC'S PLEDGE.

As they came to the edge of the woods they espied Uncle Isaac standing beneath the branches of the old maple, and, with his hand over his eyes, looking all around him as though in quest of something. Equally surprised and delighted, they ran to meet him.

"I heard you was on here," said he, "and was looking for you. How do you do, Charlie?"

"Very well, I thank you, Uncle Isaac. O, how glad I am to see you! It is a great while since you were here."

John, who knew Charlie was too modest to do it himself, showed him the lookout in the top of the tree, the house, and all that was in it, and also told him how Charlie beat them firing at a mark, though they had guns, and he a bow and arrows; and showed him the bullet-holes and arrow-marks in the target.

"What should you say if I could beat that?"

Hosted by Google

The boys entreated him to fire.

"This bow is rather small for me, and the arrow will go slower than I have been accustomed to have them, which makes it difficult judging how much it will fall. It's many a long year since I drew an arrow to the head; but I've seen the time it would have been as much as any of your lives were worth to have run across the roughest ground you ever saw, within thirty yards of my arrow; that is, if I was prepared to harm you. Have any of you hit the dot?"

"No," replied Fred; "but Charlie came within an inch of it."

"Well, I am going to hit it. Where did you stand, Charlie?"

"Here, Uncle Isaac; I put my toe right against that stone."

"I will put mine right against that stone; I want you all to see that it's fair, and I stand just in his tracks."

The boys all allowed it was fair. After firing up in the air once or twice, to get the hang of the bow, he planted an arrow, as he had said, directly in the dot.

The boys were greatly delighted at this proof of skill.

Hosted by Google

"I will show you another thing. Charlie, run to the house and get your mother's milk-pail. Now, what will you bet that I can't shoot an arrow up in the air so that it will come down in that pail?"

"It's impossible," cried Charlie; "it can't be done."

"If I do it, will you and John give me a day's work this fall digging potatoes?"

"Yes, will we."

"And so will I," said Fred.

He drew the bow, and, sure enough, the arrow came down in the milk-pail, and, as it was pointed, stuck up in it.

"Well," exclaimed Charlie, "if any man in this world had told me he had seen that done, or that it could be done, I wouldn't have believed him."

"I rather think," said Uncle Isaac, with a smile, "this is the easiest way in which I can dig my potatoes."

"Now, Uncle Isaac," said Charlie, "I want you to tell me just one thing; how did you learn to shoot so? My grandfather killed men in battle, and used to shoot at the butts on holidays, and gained prizes for shooting, but he couldn't shoot like that; and I don't believe he ever heard of anything like it."

Hosted by Google

"I learnt among the Indians, when I was a lad. I was on a visit at my uncle's, and the Indians were in ambush in the woods. My uncle was a very strong, fearless man, and an excellent marksman. It was not known that there were any Indians round; and one morning he loaded his gun (for they never went without arms in those days), and went down beside the brook to cut some timber. Instead of taking his powder-horn, he, by mistake, took a horn that was full of sand, which they kept to put on the scythe rifles. (We would say to our readers, that the scythe rifles in those days were not made as at present, by putting sand or emery upon wood, with cement; but they scratched the wood and made it rough, then smeared it with tallow, and put fine sand on it, which adhered to the tallow and the scratches.) While he was at work the Indians fired at and wounded him. He returned the fire, and killed the chief's son, and, when they rushed upon him, he killed another with the butt of his gun, when they mastered him. If he had only taken his powder-horn instead of the sand, he would probably have driven them off. They then killed my aunt and cousins, and put my poor uncle to the torture; but the chief, whose son my uncle had killed, took me for his own, and I

Hosted by Google

grew up with the Indians, and they learnt me all their ways. When I was with them I used to shoot partridges, coons, and porcupines, for my Indian mother."

"Do Indians know much? I thought they were ignorant as beasts."

"They don't know how to read in books; but they are a wise and understanding people, after their fashion. I learned to love my Indian father and mother, for they were very kind to me, and, when we were scant of food, would go without themselves to feed me."

"Why can't you stay, and go hunting with us to-morrow, and tell us more about the Indians?"

"I can't, child; because I only came over to bring some bad news, and must go right back."

"What is the news?" said John. "Is anything the matter at our house, or has there any bad tidings come from father?"

"Poor old Uncle Yelf is dead; and I hope none of us will ever die in such an awful way."

"How did he die?"

"Why, night before last his horse came home with the bridle under his feet. They raised the neighborhood, and followed the horse's tracks to William Griffin's door, and then it got dark, and

Hosted by Google

they lost them; however, they hunted in the slough holes, and all about, a good part of the night, for it was cold, and they knew if he laid out he'd perish. But the next morning, when Mr. Griffin went out to feed his hogs, there lay the poor old man in the hogs' bed, stone dead. Boys, do either of you drink spirit?"

They all replied that they had drank it.

"I drink it," said John, "at huskings and raisings, and when father gives it to me."

"So do I," said Fred; "but I don't buy any to drink myself."

"I," said Charlie, "used to drink at home, when father gave it to me; but, after he was pressed, I promised my mother not to drink any, and I never have, of my own will; but when I was in the Albatross they used to make me drink, and poured it down my throat if I refused, in order that I might sing songs, and make sport for them when I was drunk."

"Well, I want you, and John, and Frederick to agree, before I leave this spot that I am sitting on, that you will never taste another drop of liquor, without you are sick."

"Why do you want us to promise that?"

"Because I remember the time when Yelf was

Hosted by Google

as smart, iron-sided, and industrious a man as ever trod the Lord's earth. It took a withy man to lay him on his back, or lift his load, I tell you. He had a farm of two hundred acres of the best of new land; his wife milked seven cows, made butter and cheese, and spun and wove all their cloth; they had enough of everything, and everybody was as welcome to it as they were themselves. He was as well thought of as any man in town, and bid fair to be a rich man. But he carried all that stock and land to the store (except one acre and a half) in a two-quart jug, and died drunk among the hogs. Now, that poor woman, who has counted her cheese by scores, and her butter by tubs, has not a drop of milk except what the neighbors give her, nor a stick of wood but what she picks up."

Uncle Isaac's voice was broken, and the tears ran down his cheeks. The boys were greatly affected; they had never seen the calm, resolute man moved before, and the tears stood in their eyes.

"There's no telling," continued he, "what a man, who drinks ever so little, may come to, and how it may grow upon him; but if he don't drink at all he is safe."

The proposition of their friend was, notwithstanding, so strange in that day, that the boys hesitated.

Hosted by Google

"Uncle Isaac," asked John, "don't you drink?"

"Yes, I do, John; but if I was beginning life, and forming habits as you are, a drop should never cross my lips. Though I never drank a daily dram, and sometimes not for six months, and was never intoxicated in my life, I've strong thoughts — yes, I've very strong thoughts — of leaving it off altogether."

"But father drinks, and my brother Ben, and the minister, and everybody I know. When the minister comes to our house, mother gets some gin, sweetens it with loaf sugar, and puts it down on the hearth to warm. I know my mother wouldn't do anything wrong; she couldn't."

"Your father, the minister, and myself may be able to govern ourselves, but a great many others may not, and you may not. Poor Mr. Yelf never thought he should die in a hog-sty."

"But," asked Fred, "if it is wrong now, wan't it always wrong? You never said anything about it before."

"I've been thinking about it this long time, and have been gradually brought to see that it was gaining ground, and getting hold of the young ones; that it was killing people, and making poverty and misery, and have thought something ought

Hosted by Google

to be done. As long ago as when this house of Ben's was building, I found old Mr. Yelf in a slough, bruised, dirty, and bloody. Ever since that I've been thinking about it; it has kept me awake nights. But when I saw the poor old man, whom I had known so well to do, dead among the swine, I felt the time had come. I meant to have begun with older people, and should not have thought of you; but when I heard that you were all on here together, it seemed to me that the road was pinted out; that you had no bad habits to break off, and that it would be beginning at the root of the tree; for if there were no young folks growing up to drink, there would be no old ones to die drunkards."

"I'll promise," said Fred. "I should like to go ahead in something good;" and so said the others.

"I don't want you to promise without consideration, because I expect you to keep it. A promise made in a hurry is broken in a hurry. I want you to be 'fully persuaded in your own minds,' and think what you would do if your own folks should ask you to drink."

"It costs a great deal," said John. "Father spends lots of money for spirit to drink and give away; and I don't think it does anybody any good,

Hosted by Google

for I am as well as I can be without it. I'll do it, and stick to it."

"Charles," said Uncle Isaac, "go to the house and bring up Ben's big auger, that he bores yokes with."

When the auger was brought, he took it and bored a hole in the side of the maple. Now, I want you to put your hands on this auger, and promise not to drink any spirit, without you are sick, till this hole grows up."

"But," said Charlie, "after it grows up there will be nothing to keep us from drinking."

"It will be many a year before that hole grows up, for I've bored through the sap. I expect by that time you will have seen so much of the bad effects of drinking spirit, and the benefits of letting it alone, that no power on earth would persuade you to do it."

Sally now blew the horn for supper. As they went with Uncle Isaac to his boat, Fred said to him, "You know we've got a whole week for a holiday; we have been so much more used to work than play, and have so many things in our heads, that we don't know what to do first. If you was a boy, like us, what would you do to-morrow, to have the best time?"

Hosted by Google

"Yes; tell us," said Charlie.

"Well, I'll tell you, and see what you think of it. Mr. Yelf is going to be put into the ground to-morrow, and I've come on to let Ben and Sally know, that they may go over to the funeral. He has left his family miserably poor. His only son is in the Ark with Captain Rhines. The neighbors are going to send in enough for the present. Suppose, while we are gone to the funeral, you boys should go and catch a good lot of fish, — enough to last Mrs. Yelf all winter. When she was well to do, before he took to drinking, nobody went hungry in her neighborhood. I'll be on the beach, in Captain Rhines's cave, when you come back, and will split and salt the fish; there's a flake to dry them on, and no Pete Clash to throw them in the water. I will cure them; and when they are done you can take them to her."

"We don't want anything better than that," said the boys.

"I'd rather do that," said Fred, "than play at the best play in the world; you are real good to put it into our heads;" and he threw his arms around his friend's neck.

"But," asked Charlie, "how shall we know where to go? I know where to go for hake and winter

Hosted by Google

cod; but it's too late for hake, and the winter fish have not come in."

"There's rock cod on the ledges; and I can tell John, who knows the shores and islands, so that you can find them. You know, John, that lone spruce on the end of Birch Pint?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bring that to bear over the western pint of the Junk of Pork, at high-water mark; then bring the north-west side of Smutty Nose, and the south-east side of Oak Island, just touching on to each other, and you'll be on a kelp shoal, where there's plenty of rock cod, and where it is so shallow that at low water you can see them bite. Your grandfather showed me those marks. It isn't everybody that knows that spot, and I don't want you to tell them to anybody. Be sure, if it breaks, to anchor to the leeward of the breaker, because, if your anchor should drag, you might drift into it. It's a good bit to sea, but there's three of you, good stout boys, to row, that ain't afraid of trifles. The wind is north-west; I think it will be smooth, and you can take the big canoe."

"But father will want that to go to the funeral," said Charlie; "and mine is not large enough to go so far."

Hosted by Google

"Well, then, take mine; I'll go home in yours, and we will swap at the beach."

"I wish I could do more for the poor woman; it is not much to get her a lot of fish."

"Not much for you, but it will be a great deal to her, though. They have got potatoes in the ground, and that will give them hash all winter; and beans growing, and a little piece of corn, that won't come to much, but it will fat their pig, that's now running in the woods. I'll tell you what else you can do. When I come to make my cider, you can all come to our house; we will take my oxen and haul her wood enough to last all winter; and you can have just as many apples, and as much new cider, as you want."

"What shall we have for bait? There are no menhaden in the bay."

"You don't want any; rock fish will bite at clams; and it is most low water; then you can get some; and if you could get a lobster it would be first rate. I want you, while you are young, to get in the way of feeling for your fellow-critters, and then it will grow on you just as rum-drinking grows on a drunkard. When God wants us he calls for us. I'm sure I hope when he calls for me, he will find me with my hand stretched out, putting

Hosted by Google

something into some poor critter's mouth, and not drunk in a hog-sty."

"Did God call Uncle Yelf?" asked John.

"No; he went without being called; killed himself; and it's dreadful to think what has become of his soul."

It was nearly night when Uncle Isaac dropped his oars into the water. The boys went directly to digging clams by the bright moonlight; and as Ben and Sally helped them, — Sally picking them up and washing them, — it was soon accomplished. While this was going on, Charlie, with his spear, poked some lobsters from beneath the rocks. Ben was so much occupied with thoughts about Uncle Yelf's funeral, that he never asked a question in respect to the ball, or where they found it, merely saying, as he saw it in Fred's hand, "So you got your ball."

As tired as dogs, but happy, they lay down. Fred exclaimed, "What is the matter with this bed? it seems to be going up and down."

"It's the motion of the boat that is in your head," replied John.

Charlie was already snoring.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XVIII.

GENEROSITY AND PLUCK.

It was two o'clock in the morning, when Sally, who had the breakfast all ready, called the boys.

"The wind is north-west, and there will be no surf round the rocks," said Ben, who was up to help them away.

"You are sure you remember the marks?"

"Yes, father; I've written them all down in my birch-bark book."

There was a moderate breeze, the fag end of a north-wester, and the canoe, which was large, and had excellent oars, sail, and a first-rate steering paddle, went off before it rolling and going over the water at a great rate. They soon lost sight of the island, and saw nothing around them but the waves sparkling in the moonbeams, and the loom of the land like a dim black shadow on the horizon. The boys began to feel a kind of awe stealing over them, as the last glimpse of it faded from their sight, and they found themselves rushing into

Hosted by Google

the unknown waste, for they were steering straight out to sea, without compass, or any guide other than to keep before the wind till the daylight should reveal to them the land astern.

"Was you ever so far from land before, Charlie?" asked John, after they had run about an hour and a half.

"No; except in a vessel, with a crew of men, and a compass."

"It's great — ain't it? to be going through the water in this wild way, and not see or hear anything but the waves. Only see how she runs when she gets on the top of one of these long seas; and how they come up under the stern, and roll over, and go boo."

"If we should get out so far by daylight," said Fred, "that we couldn't see the land, should we ever get back?"

"We can't get so far; it was after three before we started; the land is but little way astern, and we can see it fifteen or twenty miles. We can take in sail and lie by, if we think we are getting too far."

"But the wind might blow so hard that we couldn't get back."

"I don't think there's much fun without some

Hosted by Google

risk; every old woman would go to sea if there was no danger."

"I'm a great deal more afraid of the wind dying," said Charlie; "it don't blow near so hard as it did; we may have to row."

They ran on about an hour longer, when Fred cried out, "It's daybreak, I know; there is a streak in the east."

Gradually the light increased. John soon declared that he saw the shade of the land, and didn't believe they were far enough.

"I see Elm Island," shouted Fred.

"So do I," said John; "give us your book, Charlie. Luff her up; I can't see Birch Point at all; the island hides it; there it comes out. Luff, Charlie; I see the lone spruce; luff more yet; there, it's on the Junk of Pork; there's one mark, anyhow. Fred, you keep your eye on the mark, and tell Charlie how to steer, while I look for the other one. I see Smutty Nose, but we are not far enough; I knew we wasn't. I can't see Oak Island at all; Smutty covers it all up. O, good wind, don't die! don't die! please don't die! for the sake of the widow Yelf."

In about half an hour John exclaimed, "There it comes out; I see the tall oaks on the north-east-

Hosted by Google

ern end. Hurrah! Keep away a little; here it is; both marks on; let the sheet fly!" he cried, flinging the anchor overboard. As it splashed in the water, the wind gave one puff, and died away to a flat calm, just as the rising sun flung its beams directly in the boys' faces.

"Now, brother mariners," said John, who was in high feather at this auspicious beginning of their enterprise, "we've got a fishing-ground of our own, marks of our own, all written down in a birch-bark book, and can come when we like. What do you say? shall we eat now, or wait till noon?"

"I think," said Charlie, "we had better take a bite before we wet our lines, for if we get the fish round we shan't want to stop."

As he spoke, he pulled out a pail and jug from beneath the head-board of the canoe, — one containing coffee, the other bread, meat, and two apple pies, which Sally had made the evening before, of some apples Uncle Isaac brought over to them.

"Is'nt this good?" with half an apple pie in his hand. It was something he didn't have every day, and was a rich treat to him.

"We're exactly on the marks," said he, as he threw his line overboard; "and it's just the depth

Hosted by Google

of water Uncle Isaac said there would —" He didn't finish the sentence, but, instead, began to haul in his line with all his might, and soon flung a large cod in the bottom of the canoe.

"What a handsome fellow!" said Fred; "his fins, eyes, and gills are red, and also his back."

"What a beauty! Good luck for the widow," said John, as he threw another beside it.

By this time Fred had got his line overboard, and soon added another to those already caught. For hours nothing was heard but the whizzing of lines and the flapping of fish, as they were drawn from the water. Fred, who had not been so much accustomed to fishing as the others, could not help stopping often to admire the great pile of rock cod.

They are indeed a beautiful fish when first caught, before the red hue they obtain from the kelp, among which they feed, has faded.

In addition to their clams, the boys had an abundance of lobsters and wrinkles; they had also brought some of the smelts caught in the mouth of the brook the day before. They pounded these up, and threw them into the water, which, as they sunk down and drifted astern, drew the fish from all quarters.

"I wonder what I've got," cried Fred, who was

Hosted by Google

tugging at his line, and making awful faces, it hurt his fingers so.

"Perhaps it's a shark," said John.

"O, I hope it is! I'll take out his backbone and make a cane of it."

"It may be a halibut," said Charlie, taking hold of the line to help him. But John, looking over the side, burst into laughter, as he exclaimed, "You've got the anchor!"

"I've got something; it ain't an anchor, neither," said Charlie, and pulled up an enormous lobster.

"How much bigger they grow off here in the deep water, than they do round the shores! I mean to eat him."

It was now near noon, and about low tide; the sun shone bright, the water was glassy, and they could plainly see the bottom, which was a reef of rocks covered with long kelps; the largest of which now came to the top of the water, spreading their great red leaves over its surface.

They had now caught a great many fish, and began to feel somewhat tired. Their hands, too, were sore and parboiled from the friction of the line and constant soaking in the water, especially those of John and Fred, who did not know how to take out the hook without putting their fingers into the fish's

Hosted by Google

mouth, and scratching and cutting them with his teeth and gills. But Charlie, who was better versed in the business, took out the hook with his killer — a stick made to fit the hook, and with which he knocked the fish on the head as he pulled them in. So, while one of them fished, and threw bait to keep the fish round, the others leaned over the side of the canoe, and amused themselves by looking down into the clear water, and seeing the fish swimming about among the kelp, like cattle in the pasture. There were sculpins, lobsters, perch, cod, pollock, and once in a while a haddock, all living as socially together as could be. Sometimes a cusk would stray in among them, and a sea-nettle come drifting along just outside the kelp, his long feelers streaming a yard behind him.

"Look at the muscles down there," said Fred; "I never knew muscles grew on rocks way out in the sea; I thought they grew in the mud."

"These," replied John, "are rock muscles, a much smaller kind; they are what the sea-ducks live on; they dive down and tear them off the rocks with their bills."

"What kind of a thing is that? I should like to know; there, he's close to that great rock."

"I don't know; Charlie, come here and tell us what this is."

Hosted by Google

"That," said Charlie, "is a lump-fish; he don't belong here, on a rock cod ledge, but I suppose he's out making calls this pleasant day."

"I should think he was a lump," said John; "he's square, both ends."

"They are first rate to eat," said Charlie; "let's try and catch him, and give him to Uncle Isaac, together with that great lobster."

"What is the best bait for him, Charlie?"

"I don't know. You and Fred bait him with lobster, and I will bait him with clams."

They baited their hooks, and lowering them gently into the water, watched the result. The lump, who was nearest to Charlie's bait, swam up to it, turned it round, smelt of it, and then moved off in the direction of the other lines.

"He don't like my bait," said Charlie; "he's coming to taste of yours."

But before the clumsy creature arrived at the spot, two rock cod darted at both baits, and were caught. They now all three baited with lobster, and Fred caught him. An ugly-looking, misshapen thing he was, with a black, dirty skin, like a sculpin, and called, from his lack of proportions, a lump-fish.

"How curious some of these fish do!" said John; "they come up to the bait, and go right away from

Hosted by Google

it, as though they didn't like it, and then turn right about and snap it up."

"They do just like some folks at the store, when anybody asks them to take a dram; they say they don't know as it's worth while, or as they have any occasion, but they always take it, for all that."

They had now loaded the canoe as deep as they dared; it was low water and a flat calm; the prospect was, that they would have to row the heavy-laden boat home; in that case they would need the whole of the flood tide to do it with.

"Let's reel up our lines," said Charlie; "the tide has turned."

"Let's wait a little while, and eat up the rest of our grub; perhaps there will be a southerly wind."

After reeling up their lines, they amused themselves a while by dropping pieces of bait into the water, and seeing the fish run after it, and try to take it away from each other. While they were eating, they saw a dark streak upon the water, about a mile off.

"There's the fair wind coming," said Charlie; "now we'll just wait for it."

They pulled up the anchor, and, setting the sail, continued their repast, while the canoe drifted along with the flood tide. With a fair wind and

Hosted by Google

tide, they now made rapid progress, and Elm Island, with the house, was soon in full view. They were so wet with hauling in their lines, and the wind from the sea was so damp and chilly, that they were obliged to take turns at the oars to keep themselves warm.

While they were thus engaged, Fred, who was steering, exclaimed, "I see a smoke in Captain Rhines's cove."

"So do I," said John, "and a blaze, too; what can that be for?"

"I expect," said Charlie, "Uncle Isaac is there, and has got a fire — won't that be good? — to dry our wet clothes; and won't he laugh when he comes to see all these fish? We couldn't have carried fifty weight more; she almost dips her side under every time she rolls. Keep her off a little, Fred, so that I can see by the point."

Fred changed the direction of the canoe, thus enabling them to look into the cove.

"Why, he's got two fires, a big and a little one; and there's Tige along with him."

"I tell you, boys," said Fred, "I like to eat; I think half the fun of these times is, that things taste so good out doors. It feels so good, too,

Hosted by Google

when you are wet, tired, and a little chilly, to stretch out before a good, roaring fire!"

"That's so," replied John; "and when you make the fire of old logs and stumps, with great prongs on them, to sit and eat, and see the blaze go krinkle krankle in and out among the roots, that go all criss-cross, and every which way."

"When we start off so in the night," said Charlie, "find a fishing-ground, and get lots of fish, it makes a fellow feel as though he was somebody."

"Kind of mannish," said John.

"Yes, that's what I mean."

As they neared the shore, they were equally astonished and delighted at what they saw. From a great pile of drift slabs, logs, and stumps that lay in the cove, Uncle Isaac had made two fires, — one to sit by, and the other to cook by; he had made at the small fire a crotch to hang the pot on, and placed stones to keep the fire in place under the kettle. With his broad-axe he had made a long table and seats, of slabs. His cart stood on the beach, with the oxen chained to the wheels. In it he had brought tubs to salt the fish in, knives to split, and salt to salt them; a kettle, pork, potatoes, new cider, apples, cheese, bowls, spoons and plates, knives and forks, and some eggs to roast in the

Hosted by Google

ashes. He had put the table by the big fire, and on a bench beside it sat Hannah Murch, with her white apron on, knitting, and Uncle Isaac smoking his pipe, and striving to keep from laughing.

"I hope they've got the table big enough," said John; "it's big enough for a dozen people. But only see Tige; just you look there, Charlie; he's got a chip in his mouth; when he's awful glad he always gets a chip, and gives little, short barks. O, I wish he could talk! Look, Fred! here he comes; only see how fast he swims!"

In a few moments Tige was alongside, licking John's hands, which he reached out to him, when he swam beside them till they came to the beach.

"Uncle Isaac," screamed Charlie, "I guess you'll say something when you see what we've got. O, the master lot of fish!"

"I guess I shall," he replied, standing up on his toes, and looking over the boys' heads, right into the canoe. "I shall say you have been raal smart boys, and done a fust-rate thing. 'Tisn't every three boys that have pluck enough to go fifteen miles outside, and load a big canoe, as you have done. I make no doubt you have enjoyed yourselves."

"You'd better believe we have," said Fred;

Hosted by Google

"fair tide and fair wind both ways; no rowing, and no slavery of any kind."

"I guess," said Hannah Murch, "you'll enjoy yourselves better when you get that chowder, and that something else I am going to make."

"What else, Mrs. Murch?"

"That's telling."

"How I wish father and mother were here!" said Charlie.

"Here they are," was the reply; and Ben, Sally, and the widow Hadlock came out from behind the cart.

"This is too good," said Charlie, hugging them both. Indeed, it was as much of a surprise to Ben and his wife as to the boys. Uncle Isaac, knowing that they must come to the beach, on their return from the funeral, to take the boat, had said nothing to them of his intentions.

Hannah Murch, who was a great friend of Sally, had entered into her husband's plans with all her soul, and she was not one of the kind that did things with a slack hand.

"I wish my mother was here, too," said John.

"Here she is," was the reply; and Mrs. Rhines and her daughters came out from some alder bushes at the head of the cove.

Hosted by Google

"What's in that pot over the fire now?" said Fred, who was a dear lover of good cheer, and could eat as much as a heron.

"Never you mind, Fred," replied Mrs. Murch, "the pot is doing very well; but get me those fish Isaac has just cleaned, and hand me that thing full of potatoes. Sally, will you wash and pare the potatoes? Mrs. Rhines, won't you be good enough to draw the tea? Girls, put the dishes on the table; you'll find them in a tub in the cart; and the pies are there, too, and the milk and sweetening."

While the chowder was preparing, the men, who were workmen at the business, aided by the boys, split the fish and salted them.

"Now, John," said Uncle Isaac, "these fish can stay in the pickle till you get back from the island; I've salted them slack, so they will not be hard and dry; then you can take them out, put them on the flake, and dry them. I'll come and look at them once in the while, and, when they are cured, you can take your steers and cart and take them to the widow's; she is in no hurry for them, as the neighbors have given her all she needs for the present."

"I think, Uncle Isaac, we all caught them, and we all ought to carry them. If I should go alone,

Hosted by Google

it would look as though I had done it all. If she ain't in any hurry for them, why can't they stay at our house till we go to haul her wood? and then we might dig her potatoes, and put them in the cellar, and she will be all fixed up for winter."

"That will be the best way, John."

They now washed out the canoe, and the day's work was done. As the boys were still some wet, they piled whole slabs on the fire, and lay down before it, waiting for supper, their wet clothes smoking in the heat. The great pot was now put in the middle of the table, and Hannah Murch filled the bowls as fast as they were emptied, which was not seldom.

"Don't give Fred any more, Aunt Hannah," said John; "he'll kill himself, and his blood will be on your head."

"Shouldn't think you need say anything," growled Fred; "that's the third bowlful you've eaten."

"I don't believe there ever was so good a chowder as this," said Charlie; "I never tasted anything so good in all my life."

After the chowder came the roasted eggs. Uncle Isaac now brought a broad, thin flat rock from the beach, which, after Hannah had washed in boiling

Hosted by Google

water, he placed in the middle of the table. She then went to the pot which had so excited Fred's curiosity, and took from it an apple pudding, which she had made at home, and brought with her, and put it on the rock; she also brought a jug of sauce.

"I knew," she said to Sally, "how well you liked my apple puddings when you was a girl, and I mean't you should have one. I've done my best; if it ain't good I shall be sorry."

If the proof of a pudding is in the eating, Mrs. Murch certainly succeeded, for every morsel was devoured. The cheese, apples, and cider furnished the dessert, of which the boys freely partook, as cider was not mentioned in Uncle Isaac's pledge, or even thought of. Indeed, that was but the germ in a thoughtful, benevolent mind, of principles that were to be widely extended in after years. It was found, when all were satisfied, that a large portion of the eggs, cheese, butter, bread, pies, and milk, had not been tasted.

"I'll just leave these," said Uncle Isaac, "as I go home, at the widow Yelf's; the boys, I reckon, can take care of the apples."

It was far into the evening before the party separated. The boys lingered after the rest were gone, declaring they had eaten so much it was impossible

Hosted by Google

for them to row over at present. They lay by the fire listening to the dip of Ben's oars, and the rumble of Uncle Isaac's cart, till both died away in the distance.

"What say for going in swimming?" asked John.

"It's too cold," replied Fred; "who ever heard of anybody going in swimming in the night, at this time of year?"

"I'll stump you both to go in."

"I won't take a stump from anybody," said Charlie; "go ahead; I'll follow."

John got his clothes off first, and, running in half leg deep, hesitated.

"Is it warm?" asked Fred.

"Splendid!" was the reply, as he soused in.

The others followed.

"Murder!" screamed Fred, the instant he got his head above water; "I should think it was splendid;" and, catching up his clothes, ran to the fire, followed by the others, their teeth chattering in their heads. Standing before the great fire, they put on their clothes, and were soon as warm as ever. They now took the apples that were left, put them in the canoe, and piling a great heap of slabs on the table, set it on fire, and pulled away by the

Hosted by Google

light of it, Charlie steering, and singing to them an old English song about one Parker, who was hung at the yard-arm for mutiny at the ——. It must be borne in mind that slabs were not considered worth anything in those days, and were thrown out of the mill to go adrift, and the shores were full of them, so that boys had plenty of material for bonfires. John had prevailed upon his mother to let Tige go with them, as the widow Hadlock said Sam might come over and stop nights till John came back.

"Haven't we had a good time to-day, Fred?" asked John, after they were once more in bed on Elm Island.

"Never had such a good time in my life. I'm real glad Tige bit me, that I got to going with you and Charlie, and you like me. I used to think there couldn't be any good time without I was in some deviltry. Then to think how good Uncle Isaac and his wife were to come down there and bring all those good things, just that we boys might have a good time! Wasn't that apple pudding and sauce good?"

Fred slept in the middle, and, in the fulness of his heart, he hugged first one and then the other of his companions.

Hosted by Google

"It seems," said John, "that Uncle Isaac knew what we wanted better than we did ourselves."

"What shall we do to-morrow, Charlie?"

He received no answer; Charlie was fast asleep; and all three of them were soon buried in those refreshing slumbers that succeed to exercise and exposure in the open air. It was impossible that Uncle Isaac's dealings with the boys should be kept secret, although he mentioned it to no one; and the only witness was a crow that sat on the top of a neighboring birch.

Ben was in the house when Charles came for the auger. "What does he want it for?" asked he.

"I don't know; he told me to get it."

Ben returned to the woods, wondering what Uncle Isaac could be going to do with the auger. But at night, before Charlie went to bed, he told Ben and his wife all that had been said and done on both sides. Ben remained silent after he had told the story.

At length Sally said, "I don't think, myself, that boys ought to drink spirit till they are old enough to have discretion, and to make a proper use of it; but to promise *never to drink*, I never heard of such a thing. For my part, I don't see how anybody that works, and is exposed, can get along without it; and I'm sure they can't in sickness."

Hosted by Google

"Yes," replied Ben; "and by the time they come to have discretion (as Uncle Isaac says), they have formed the habit, and half of them die drunkards. Everybody can see what rum has done for poor Mr. Yelf. How many times I've heard my father and mother tell what good times they used to have going there visiting; how well they lived; and that the house was full of everything! and now to think, that the week before he died he sold his axe for rum.

"I've heard Uncle Isaac, a number of times within a year, talk about drinking, in what I thought a strange way, and as he never did before. I don't believe he has done this without thinking about it a good while: the promise won't do the boys any hurt."

"That's very true," replied Sally; "for last summer, when Mr. Hanson's barn was raised, the York and Pettigrew boys, mere children, got hold of the spirit that was brought for the raising, and were as drunk as fools; some laughed, but mother said she thought it was an awful sight."

"I must needs say," continued Ben, "when I saw old Mrs. Yelf, who has suffered so much from liquor, and is so destitute, bring it on to treat the mourners, and old Jonathan Smullen (who is going

Hosted by Google

as fast as he can in the same way as Yelf) drink it, it kind of went against my feelings. I couldn't help thinking that money had better have gone for food and clothing."

"I suppose she thought she must."

"That's what makes me think the whole thing is wrong — that a poor creature must spend her last penny to treat her friends."

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XIX.

FRED'S SAND-BIRD PIE.

THE next morning, having despatched their breakfast, they sat down under a tree, which, being on high ground, afforded a good position from which to judge of the weather. The question as to how they should spend the day, came up.

"It's going to be a splendid day," said Fred; "and I, for one, will tell you what I should like to do. You know I like those scrapes where there's something good to eat."

"I should think so," replied Charlie, "according to what I saw you eat last evening."

"Did either of you ever eat any sand-birds?"

"We never did."

"You never tasted anything half so good as a sand-bird pie; I always calculate to have a real tuckout once a year on sand-birds. Mother takes the biggest dish in the house and bakes a smashing great pie."

"Let's go," said John. "Where's the place?"

Hosted by Google

"You know where Sandy Point is?"

"I hope so."

"Well, right close to it, there's a lot of little ledges; some of them ain't bigger at high water than a table; some not so big; just a little speck in the water."

"I know; I've been there many a time to shoot brants."

"These sand-birds feed on the shore till they are chock brimful, and the tide comes and drives them off; then they fly on to these ledges; but they are as afraid of getting wet as a cat; and when the tide comes up around the rock, they huddle together to keep out of the water, till they are all in a bunch, and the rock looks blue with them; it's the greatest chance for a shot; but," continued he, after a pause, "perhaps Mrs. Rhines wouldn't want the trouble of making it."

"Yes, she would," replied Charlie; "she and father would like it as well as we. I'll go and ask her." He ran to the house, and came back, saying she would make it, if they would dress the birds.

"I," said John, "should like to go to some strange place, where we never have been. I heard Joe Griffin and Henry telling about a place; they said it was eight or nine miles to the eastward of Birch

Hosted by Google

Point, where nobody lives. They said there were great hills of strange-looking rocks, with a flat between them, and a brook running through it; that the Indians used to live there; and you could see the stones where they made their fires, and find arrow-heads, and Indian things that were buried there; and Uncle Isaac knew where; that somewhere along the side of the brook there was red paint, as good as ever was, and that Uncle Isaac had a room painted with it; that there were partridges there, and way back was a pond, that the brook ran out of, with pickerel in it. Joe said the way to tell it was, right off the mouth of the cove there was a great, high rock, that came up out of the water, with three spruces on the top of it, and a little turf, but the sides were all bare; and he said there were reefs and breakers all round it; but I'll bet, if we could find it, we could see the reefs break, and keep clear of them."

"I say, go!" said Charlie; "I do want the red paint so much! I want to paint my canoe. I can buy black paint, and there'll be two colors; and I want to see the Indian things."

"I want to shoot partridges," said John, "catch pickerel, see the place, and get some paint to paint my cart, and some things for mother."

Hosted by Google

"I want to paint a box I've got, that I keep my things in," said Fred. "I'll give up the sand-bird pie; let's go!"

"It's flood tide," said John; "we can do both. Let us go and get the birds, have our pie, and then go and camp out at the other."

They took their guns and a luncheon, and were soon on their way. By Fred's direction they landed a little way from the point, from which three of the rocks were distant but half a gun-shot, being, indeed, connected with the point at low water, the extremity of which was fringed with low bushes, through which they crawled in different directions, when they found that the rocks were as Fred had said — blue with birds. It was arranged that Fred should caw like a crow in succession; at the first summons they were to get ready; at the second, Charlie and John were to fire; but Fred was to fire as they rose.

At the signal the guns were discharged, and the rock was covered with dead and wounded; as they rose in a thick cloud, Fred fired, when many more fell — some on the rock, but most of them in the water. These Tige instantly began to bring ashore, and lay down at John's feet.

"We've killed half a bushel!" cried Fred; "didn't I tell you this was the place?"

Hosted by Google

"We can never eat a quarter part of these," said John.

"Never mind; let us carry every one of them to the island; it is cool weather; they will keep till you and I go home, and then we can get our mothers to make us another pie, to remember this holiday by; and Charlie and his folks can have another pie after we are gone."

"Now for home and the Indians' place," said Charlie.

They took to their oars, and rowing with a good will, reached the island some time before noon. The instant the canoe touched the beach Charlie leaped from it, and, rushing into the house, bawled out, "Mother, put on the pot! They're coming with the birds! O, lashings of them! I'll make a fire!" and ran for the wood-pile. Charlie crammed the brush under the pot to heat water to scald the birds, that they might pick them the faster.

John and Fred now came in with the lower button of their jackets buttoned up, and their bosoms, pockets, arms, and hats full of dead birds. They unloaded on the middle of the hearth, and went back for more.

"Boys," asked Sally, "have you eaten your luncheon?"

Hosted by Google

No; they couldn't stop; forgot it.

"Then eat it now, and have your dinner on the birds."

"Yes," said Charlie; "and then start off to camp out."

The boys ate their luncheon while the water was heating, and then began to pick and dress the birds; and, when Ben came in, he helped them. When prepared, they looked like balls of butter, they were so covered with yellow fat.

While the pie was baking, John began to show the boys how Tige would fetch and carry, and give any one his paw to shake, and dive to bring up things from the bottom.

"You didn't know I had a dog — did you?" asked Charlie.

"Yes," replied John; "Sailor."

"No; one as big as three of him."

Charlie had been so much occupied with the boys, that he had forgotten all about the pig, and had not seen him for almost a week. But the pig was not at all concerned about the matter, as the woods were full of acorns and beech-nuts, and he was enjoying himself very much to his own satisfaction.

Charlie now went to the edge of the woods, and

Hosted by Google

called, "Rover! Rover!" when down came the pig from the woods, and, jumping upon Charlie, put his fore feet in his lap, and rubbing his nose against him, seemed full as glad to see him as Tige ever was to see John. Charlie then put some acorns in his pocket, and the pig took them out with his nose; then he held up a stick, and told him to jump, and over it he jumped.

"Now, Rover," said he, pointing to the beach, "go get a clam."

In a moment he ran to the beach, rooted up a clam with his nose, and brought it to his master. The boys were full of amazement to see a pig do such things.

"Will he bring birds ashore?" asked John.

"No; he won't go near the water, except a mud puddle; he's afraid of the water. A hog can't swim much more than a hen; but I tell you what he will do, he'll haul the baby in a cart."

Charlie had made a cart, with arms to it, for the baby, and a harness of canvas for Rover; so he harnessed up the pig, who drew the baby all along the green between the house and the water.

"Tige will do that," said John.

They took out the pig, and put in Tige, who walked off as careful as could be.

Hosted by Google

"Let's have a strong team," said Fred; "let's put them both in, one before the other."

As Tige didn't seem very fond of the pig, and had shown some disposition to bite him, it was not thought safe to trust him behind; so they got some ropes, and traced him up forward. While they were drawing the baby in great style along the edge of the beach, Ben was hiding behind a rock on the White Bull, trying to get a shot at some sea-ducks; at length he fired, killing four of them. Tige looked up at the report, and seeing the dead birds floating on the water, ran with all his might down hill into the cove, dragging pig, baby, and all after him, at a break-neck pace, into the sea. Charlie, leaping into the water, caught at the child, but, missing it, grasped one wheel, which upset the cart in an instant, pitching the screaming child into the water, from which it was instantly rescued by Charlie, who, however, had to swim for it. Meanwhile Tige, utterly regardless of the commotion he was causing, or to how great an extent he was injuring his previous high reputation, swam steadily along, dragging the half-drowned pig after him, till he got among the birds, when, taking one in his mouth, he swam to the White Bull; where Ben, who had watched the whole proceeding, relieved

Hosted by Google

him from the harness, when he swam off and brought in the remainder. By this time John and Fred had arrived in the canoe. The pig lay on the beach apparently almost dead.

"I guess he'll die," said Fred. "How bad Charlie will feel!"

They put him, together with the cart, into the canoe, and took him to the cove, where they laid him carefully on the grass.

Charlie, meanwhile, had gone to the house with the baby.

"Well," said Sally, as she received the screaming, dripping child, "I'm sure I don't know what this child is born for; it's not six months old, and has been almost burned to death, and drowned."

When Charlie returned, and saw Rover in such a condition, he came very near bursting into tears; he knelt down by him, wiped the froth away from his mouth, and rubbed him, calling him good Rover; but piggy gave no signs of life, except it could be perceived he breathed.

Ben now came over from the White Bull in his canoe.

"Father," cried Charlie, "do come here; Rover is going to die; can't you help him?"

Hosted by Google

"The first thing," said Ben, after looking at him, "is to get the water out of him."

"In England, when people are most drowned, they roll them on a barrel; shall I get one?"

"I guess I can get it out easier than that," said Ben; and, taking the pig by the hind legs, he held him up clear from the ground, when the water he had taken in ran out of his nose in a stream. When he put him down the pig gave a grunt.

"He's coming to!" cried Charlie; and in a few moments more the pig got up on his fore legs, but fell back again.

"He'll do well enough now; he's only weak."

Charlie took his head in his lap and patted him, when the pig gave three or four loud grunts, and got up on his feet. Just then Sally called from the door that dinner was ready.

"I'm ready to eat it, or do anything else," said Charlie, "now that baby is not drowned, and Rover has come to."

In consequence of all this Tige was somewhat in disgrace.

"You naughty dog," said John to him, "do you know what you've done? almost drowned Charlie's pig and the baby; I shouldn't have thought that of you. What do you suppose folks

Hosted by Google

would say, if it should go all over town what you have done?"

But so far from manifesting any contrition, Tige, all the time his master was talking to him, kept wagging his tail, and looking him in the face.

"You must not throw a person away for one mistake," said Ben. "Tige has been trained from childhood to feel, that to get birds when they are shot is the great duty of his life."

"Well, Fred," said Sally (when the pie had come upon the table, and he had despatched the first plateful), "what do you think of my pie?"

"Tongue cannot tell," he replied, holding out his plate for more.

"I think," said Ben, "it is about the best mess I ever tasted; I mean to have one every year after this."

"Wouldn't father like this?" asked John: "when he gets home we'll have some."

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XX.

A HAIR-BREADTH ESCAPE.

DINNER at length being over (though later than usual, on account of the time occupied in baking the pie, and later, still, by reason of the goodness of it), they prepared to start, taking with them an axe to build a camp, tinder in a horn, flint, steel, and matches, which were made by dipping splinters of wood into melted brimstone, and which would burn when touched to the spark in the tinder. As they were to be gone but a short time, they carried no materials for cooking, but took their provisions ready cooked.

The wind was fair, but light, and they steered for the lone spruce on Birch Point, and, passing it, kept on to the north-east, having resolved to run the shore along, keeping a bright lookout for the high rock with the spruce on its summit, till they judged by the tide it was midnight, when, if they could not find the place, they would go ashore and camp, continuing their search in the morning. As

Hosted by Google

night fell the wind began to rise, and dark clouds occasionally obstructed the moon. They coasted swiftly along the wild and rugged shore, looking in vain for the landmark. All at once the sea combed astern of them, with a tremendous roar, and so near that they were wet with the spray.

"We've run over a breaker," said John; "if we had been ten feet farther astern it would have filled and sunk us. How could it be that, when you and Fred are both on the lookout, you didn't see it?"

"I'll tell you why," said Charlie; "because it didn't break after we were in sight. It is one of those breakers I have heard father tell of, that break only once in a good while; he said, that while some break every three minutes, and oftener, others break only once in fifteen minutes, or half an hour; and you cannot see such breakers in the night, and might be running right over one when it broke, as we came near doing just now."

"Luff!" cried Fred; and, as they looked under the sail, they saw the white foam of the surf to the leeward.

"There's breakers all around us," said Charlie; "let's take to the oars, and then we can keep clear of them."

Hosted by Google

Our young readers must bear in mind that these canoes could only go before the wind, or a little quartering, and therefore could not, like a boat, be luffed sharp into the wind, and beat out clear of danger; hence the boys preferred to take the sail in, and trust to their oars, with which they could, if they saw a breaker, pull away from it. At length they discovered a narrow passage, that seemed to lead in among the breakers to a high bluff, and rowed into it, having reefs and breakers on either side of them. They coasted along the bluff till they discovered beyond it a low point, and between them a cove with a little narrow beach. In the end of the high bluff was a large cave, into which the moon shone, partly revealing its extent. Here they determined to land, and build a brush camp. While they were looking about for a place to get up the rocky, steep shore, they stumbled upon this cave, and determined to explore it. It ran about twenty feet into the rock, which, being formed to a great extent of iron pyrites, had crumbled beneath the united forces of the frost and waves. John clambered up the bank, and found some dry brush, with which they made a torch. As they went in they found the bottom rose, and in the middle was a little elevation, somewhat higher than the rest.

Hosted by Google

The walls were ragged, and just high enough to permit them to stand upright.

"What a nice place to camp!" said John; "we couldn't have a better one."

"But won't the tide come in here? You know it is full of the moon, and high tides, now," asked Fred.

"I don't believe it does, else there would be chips, drift stuff, and sea-weed in here; but this is as clean as a house floor."

There was plenty of dead wood on the top of the bluff; this they cut, and tumbled down the bank; then cut some hemlock boughs from small bushes, that were soft to sleep on, and put them on the little elevation in the middle. Then they stuck birch-bark torches into the crannies in the cave, moored the canoe in front of it, and took their guns, fishing-lines, and powder-horns, and set them up in the back part of the cave. They now piled up a great heap of wood in the mouth of the cave, so that the smoke would not enter, kindled the fire, and lighted the torches, till it was one glare of light, and the old rocks steamed with the heat. The provisions they had brought were eagerly devoured, with the exception of the remnants of the sand-bird pie, and some bread, which were left for another

Hosted by Google

occasion. The perils they had passed through, and the strange position in which they were placed, rendered them little inclined to sleep.

Though boys are little given to sentiment, and the animal nature predominates, yet the scene was so singularly wild and beautiful, it was impossible they should not be impressed by it, which they manifested in their own fashion.

"Isn't it great to camp in a cave?" asked Charlie. "How many things I've heard about caves! I wonder if any robbers or pirates ever lived in this."

A little on their left was the high, rocky bank of the cove, with its narrow strip of white sand, sheltered from the wind by the high bluff, on which the retiring wavelets gently rolled, silvered by the moonbeams. In front was a group of reefs, which the boys had threaded, and on which the surf was rolling feather white.

"Look there, boys!" said John; "see the moon shining on that surf, when it rolls up, and then on the black rock when it goes back; isn't that handsome? I've left my gun and powder-horn in the canoe, and now the tide has floated her off; would you wade in?"

"No; I wouldn't wet my feet; let them be."

They now lay down to sleep; but Tige, instead

Hosted by Google

of placing himself at John's feet, as usual, went up on the bank to lie down in the woods.

"What do you suppose makes Tige do that?" asked John.

"Perhaps he don't like to sleep in a cave," said Fred, "and wants to be out doors, where he can bark at the moon. Our Watch always wants to be out moonlight nights."

"I'll tell you; he don't like to lie on brush, nor on the rock; I'll make him a bed."

John called him back, and threw down his long jacket at his feet, and made him lie down on it. He still seemed uneasy, and got up again; but John scolding at him, he lay down and went to sleep. The whole party were now sound asleep. How long they had slept they knew not, when John was aroused by the barking of Tige, who, not satisfied with waking him, took hold of his collar with his teeth, and pulled him half upright. Stretching out his leg in a fright, he plunged it into the cold water. At the cry John uttered both the boys awoke, when they found themselves in utter darkness, and surrounded by water. The tide, unusually high, had flowed into the cave, put out the fire, the brands of which were floating around them, and filled the whole cave, except the elevation upon which they had made their bed.

Hosted by Google

"We shall all be drowned!" cried Fred, bursting into tears.

"No, we shan't!" said John; "I can see a little light at the mouth; but what we do, we must do quickly. Follow me and Tige. Come, Tige." And plunging into the water, he followed Tige, who led the way to the mouth of the cave, where John had seen the streak of light. There was but just room between the water and the roof for the passage of their heads; and had it not been for the sagacity of the dog, had they slept till the water reached their couch and waked them, they must have been blocked in and perished. Swimming to the beach, they clambered up the bank, and were safe. But they were in a sorry pickle; the night was cold, they were soaked with water, and in a strange and uninhabited place.

"What shall we do?" said Charlie; "the fire-works are all in the cave; we shall have to run about till daylight, to keep from freezing."

"Your gun and powder-horn are in the canoe," said John; "I can get fire with the gun."

John swam off to the canoe, and soon brought her ashore. After several trials they succeeded in getting fire with the gun. Their spirits rose at once with the crackling of the flames and the grateful warmth.

Hosted by Google

"Who cares!" said John; "we ain't drowned, have got a fire, and can get our things when the tide ebbs."

The first thing John did, after getting warm, was to caress Tige, as did the others.

"We owe our lives to him," said Charlie.

"Yes; and I was scolding at him this very afternoon, and was a good mind to whip him. Good old dog! I'm sorry; and if we had anything to eat ourselves, I would give you some. Now I know the reason he went off in the woods, and didn't want to sleep there; he knew the tide would come in there."

"How could he know that? I saw him," said Charlie, "when we first came, smelling all around the walls; perhaps he smelt where the water had come before."

"Perhaps so."

"I think," said Charlie, "a higher power than Tige had something to do with it; you know how loath your mother was to have you bring him, and wouldn't let you the first time. I think it was what my mother used to call a 'providence of God.'"

"That's just what my mother will say, the moment I tell her about it."

Hosted by Google

The sail of the canoe, spread over a pole supported by crotches, made them a tent, and they were soon asleep. Tige showed no disposition this time to leave the tent, but stretching himself at his master's feet, snored audibly. The morning sun, shining in their faces, woke up the tired sleepers, and, going down to the bluff, they saw the high rock with the three spruces not more than half a mile off. The tide had now ebbed so much that they went into the cave with the canoe. The guns were full of water, but the powder in the horns was not injured. A jug of coffee, that was stopped tight, was as good as ever. The remains of their pie and bread were soaked in salt water, but the hungry boys ate a good part of it. They drew the charges from the guns, and heating some water in the tin pan that had contained their pie, scalded out the gun-barrels, and dried them at the fire, and they went as well as before.

They now set out for the high rock, and doubling it, entered the cove. It was, indeed, a singular spot. Along the edge of the water were about two acres of land, entirely bare of trees, and covered with grass. Upon each side rose two rugged hills, that seemed to have been cleft in two, so perpendicular — so much alike were their sides of smooth

Hosted by Google

rock — as to permit the passage of a brook between them. The hills were covered with an enormous growth of yellow birch, rock maple, and oaks. The birches thrust their roots into the crevices of the rocks, and hung from the sides wherever there was the least soil.

"What kind of rocks are these?" asked Charlie; "they are red, and look like rusty iron; the ground is red, too. How hard some of these rocks are! and some are soft, and crumble in your hand."

"Just taste of that," said Fred, giving Charlie a piece of shelly, yellowish rock, who, putting it to his mouth, instantly spit it out, saying that it tasted like copperas. Fred and Charlie began now to search among the long grass for some traces of the Indian village, but found only charred wood, and stones which had formed rude fireplaces, blackened by smoke. Their search naturally led them to the bank of the brook.

"I never saw such water as this before," said Fred, stooping down to drink; "it is red, but it tastes well enough."

Following along its banks they found some arrow-heads, where the soil had caved away. They were made of a stone resembling flint, sharp at the point, and on each edge, but the edges were

Hosted by Google

irregular, showing that they were made by chipping. Some of them were light-colored, others dark. They had brought a hoe and shovel, and the soil, being sandy, offered but little resistance. They soon dug out more arrow-points, and something that looked like the bowl of a pipe, made of a softer stone.

"What is that, Fred?"

"An Indian pipe. I saw my cousin have one, and he said that's what it was."

"How did they smoke with it; there's no stem — only a little mite."

"He said they stuck a piece of elder in it for a stem."

Continuing their search, Fred dug out an iron instrument, entirely red with rust.

"I know what that is," he said, rubbing it over the edge of the hoe, to get off the rust.

"What is it?"

"A tomahawk."

"It looks like a hatchet. What is it for? — to cut wood?"

"To cut wood! To cut folks' heads off, and split them open. The Indians killed my grandfather with just such a thing as that; they will throw 'em so that they will whirl over and over till the edge sticks right into a man's skull."

Hosted by Google

"How did they kill your grandfather?"

"He was leading his horse to the brook to drink. The Indians were hid in the bushes; the horse either saw or smelt them, and wouldn't go to the water. My grandfather tried to get him to go at first, but in a minute he thought it was Indians, and jumped on his back and set him into a run. The Indians gave chase, and one of them threw a tomahawk, and struck it into the side of his neck; he kept on the horse just long enough to reach home, and fell on the door-step; and for all the horse run, the Indians were at the door almost as soon as he. My uncle fired and shot one of them, and they went off; but my grandfather died about sun-down."

"Did your uncle shoot the one who threw the tomahawk?"

"I don't know; I hope so; but they didn't get his scalp."

"What is that?"

"Why, don't you know what a scalp is?"

"No; what is it?"

"When the Indians killed any white folks, they cut a piece of skin off the top of their heads, with the hair on, and carried it off."

"What made 'em do that?"

Hosted by Google

"I don't know; because they were Indians, I suppose."

"Does Uncle Isaac know?"

"To be sure he does."

"Then I'll ask him."

"Fred," said Charlie, holding the rusty weapon in his hand, "do you expect this ever killed anybody?"

"Yes; I expect it has killed many a one; there's something red on it; perhaps it's blood."

"May be so."

They walked along the bank of the brook, digging here and there, but finding nothing to reward their search till they came to the edge of the forest. All around among the scattered pines were the remains of fireplaces, and large heaps of clam-shells. It was evident that here (in times long gone by) had been a camping ground, and that the forest had overgrown it. A large pine, torn up by the tempest, lay across the brook. Looking into the cavity made by its removal, they saw something white, and, examining more narrowly, found it was a bone.

"It's Indian bones," cried Fred; and, plying the shovel, he soon brought to view the skeleton of an Indian. The skull, teeth, hair, and thigh-bones were but very little decayed. A dark ring, evidently

Hosted by Google

the remains of some vegetable substance, completely surrounding the skeleton, was distinctly visible in the yellow sand.

"That is what he was buried in," said Fred. They set themselves to discover what it was.

"It's birch bark," said Charlie.

"No, it ain't," said Fred, who had at length found a portion that was less decayed than the rest; "it's elm-rind."

"What is that?"

"Why, the inside bark of an elm; it's real strong. I get it every year to string corn with, to keep the crows away."

"O, Fred, look! what are these?" and Charlie picked out from among the bones a double handful of little round things, about the size of a modern lozenge, with a hole in the centre. They had been strung on a piece of deer sinew, which was still in some places quite strong, and had evidently hung about the neck of the skeleton. There were also in the grave arrow-heads, and under the neck a piece of the skin of some animal, with the hair still on it. Searching farther, they found a most singular-shaped stone, with an edge like an axe, and near the top a groove nearly half an inch in depth all around it; also, a pipe, a piece of bone pointed at

Hosted by Google

one end, and in the other a hole, and a tooth pointed, exceedingly hard and white. Charlie appealed in vain to his companions to tell him what these things were for. Fred's knowledge was very limited; he *guessed* they were what the Indian babies had to play with.

"This tooth," said Charlie, "belonged to some wild animal — perhaps a wolf; I mean to ask Uncle Isaac. Fred, you know these things belong to both of us; what shall I give you for your share?"

"Nothing, Charlie; you are welcome to my part; I don't care for keeping such things. I like the fun of finding them, and to look at them once; after that I don't care anything about them."

John, who was less interested in arrow-heads, had gone among the birches in quest of partridges, and returned, having killed six. After they had cooked and eaten two of them, they went in pursuit of the yellow paint, the great object of the expedition. Following the course of the brook for some distance, they came to where the soil changed to a stiff clay, and the brook was obstructed by an old beaver-dam, causing the water in many places to stand in little pools, in the bottom of which, and in the shelves of the rock which formed the bed of

Hosted by Google

the brook, was a sediment of yellow mud, devoid of grit, and fine as flour. It was an ochre formed by the decomposition of iron pyrites, which had impregnated the clay, and stained the water of the brook.

"Here it is!" cried John, who was the first to perceive it; "here is the yellow stuff; only see how it stains my hands."

The others gathered round him, and, with curious eyes, examined the treasure.

"Won't we paint things!" cried Charlie. "I'll paint everything in the house, — my sink, the baby's cradle, my canoe, mother's churn, the closet under the dressers, and my bedstead."

"O, Charlie!" said John; "and your house under the maple."

"Yes," said Fred; "and all the drawers and shelves, too."

"I," said John, "mean to paint my steers' yoke, my gunning float, sled, and the boat father made me, if we can get enough; and I'll paint my bedroom, then put some into whitewash and paint the walls."

"I," said Fred, "have got a sled, a chest, and a writing-desk to paint; and I mean to paint the measures in the mill, and a little box for my sister."

Hosted by Google

They worked with might and main, scooping it out of the hollows in the bed of the rock, as that was the most free from grit. Putting it into their dinner-pail, they turned it into the forward part of the canoe.

"Only see where the sun is!" cried John, looking up; "I declare it's most night; we must start this minute, and we shan't be able to go to the pond where the pickerel are."

The wind had now moderated to a light breeze, and was sufficiently favorable to have laid their course with a *boat*, but a *canoe* will do nothing on the wind.

"What makes everybody have canoes?" asked Charlie. "In England they have boats with keels, masts, and sails, just like sloops and schooners; they will sail on the wind, and beat to windward as well as the Perseverance."

"I never saw any such thing," said John; "but I've heard father tell of them."

"They have timbers, are planked up, and calked, just, for all the world, like little vessels; and in some of them the planks are lapped over each other and nailed."

"I shouldn't think," said Fred, "anything could be tight without oakum."

Hosted by Google

"Why not? A barrel and a pail is tight, and there is no oakum in them."

"But the staves are jointed, and the hoops squat them together."

"So the planks of these boats are jointed, and the nails are clinched, and draw them as tight as a hoop does a barrel. Some of the boats the great folks have are painted the most beautiful colors, and gold leaf on them, and the sails as white as the driven snow."

"Gold leaf!" said John; "what, the same that is on our great looking-glass, that father brought home from sea?"

"Yes."

Thus chatting, they rowed leisurely along, not caring to hurry, since these were the last hours of their holiday.

"How did the Indians get fire?" asked Charlie.

"I don't know," said John; "but they did."

"Perhaps," said Fred, "when the lightning struck a tree, and set it on fire, they kept it, and never let it go out."

"I don't believe but it would go out some time," said Charlie.

"I tell you what I should like to do, John; get Uncle Isaac to tell us how the Indians used to do,

Hosted by Google

and go off in the woods and be real Indians a whole week; perhaps he'd go with us."

"I should rather he would tell us, and then go on our own hook; and we'll do it, Charlie."

They reached the island about eight o'clock in the evening, with all their treasures, fatigued, but happy, having enjoyed themselves to the top of their bent, and with enough to think and talk about to last them half the winter.

Hosted by Google

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BOYS AND THE WIDOW.

MONDAY morning Charlie went over with the boys to the main land.

"I know the first thing I'll have to do," said John, as they neared the shore; "wash these fish and put them on the flakes."

"We'll help you," said Charlie; "it's a short job for all three of us; and you know we've promised to help Uncle Isaac dig potatoes one day, because he shot the arrow into the milk-pail; and to help him cut and haul some wood to Mrs. Yelf. Then these fish are to be taken to her."

"I calculate to do my part of it," replied John.

"So do I," said Fred.

"I should like to know," said Charlie, "when he wants us to come, before I go back. I am going over to see."

Charlie had other reasons for wishing to see Uncle Isaac, which he kept to himself.

When they were building the ark, Uncle Isaac

Hosted by Google

had taken much pains to teach him to hew. Charlie knew there was a great deal of small timber in the barn frame — braces, purlins, and sleepers — that he could hew as well as anybody; and, now that he had a little money, was very anxious to have a broad-axe of his own, that he might help hew the barn frame. Uncle Isaac told him there was a vessel going to Salem with timber, and he would send by the captain, who was a relative of his, and get one for him, and then grind it for him, and put in a good white-oak handle, and bend it just right. The handle of a broad-axe is bent, that the person who uses it may strike close to the timber without hitting his knuckles. He could not then tell the precise day when he should want them, but he would get John to hang a white cloth out of the garret window, as a signal, to come the next morning, or, if that was stormy, the first fair day.

Charlie and Ben had been so fully occupied during the summer, they had not caught a single fish to dry for winter; so Charlie now busied himself in fishing, while Ben continued to hew the timber for the barn, which was to be very large.

Every time Charlie went out fishing, he comforted himself with the thought of what a good time he would have when he got his new sail, and his canoe

Hosted by Google

painted, which he did not intend to do till he hauled her up for the winter. He met with no squalls this autumn, for when the weather looked at all unsettled he could work with Ben in the woods, and fall down the large pines for him to hew, which he dearly loved to do; and, as it took a long time to hew out a large stick of timber, he had ample time to cut them down and trim them out. He also, after the timber was hewn, hauled it on to the spot, except the largest sticks, which were left to be hauled on the snow.

A cat never watched more narrowly for a mouse than our Charlie for the white cloth in Captain Rhines's garret window; but day after day passed, and no signal rewarded his anxious watch.

"Mother," said he, after more than ten days had elapsed, "perhaps Uncle Isaac has forgotten his promise, and he and the other boys have dug the potatoes."

"Charlie, what time is it high water to-morrow?"

"Nine o'clock, mother."

"But perhaps the tide will forget to come up."

"O, mother! that's impossible."

"Well, when the tide forgets to flow, Uncle Isaac will forget his promise."

The next day, as Charlie was coming home from

Hosted by Google

fishing, about two o'clock, he thought there was something white in Captain Rhines's window. The moment he landed, he scampered to the house to look through the glass. Sure enough, there was the signal.

"John meant you should see it," said Sally, "for he has got his mother's great table-cloth that father Rhines bought in Europe."

"That means for me to come over in the morning, if it's fair weather; if not, the first pleasant day."

"You had better go to-night; perhaps it may blow hard to-morrow, and be a fair day, too."

"I will, mother, as soon as I split and salt my fish."

"I'll salt them; you split them, and start right off, and you'll get over there to supper. I'll have a luncheon for you by the time you get them split."

The boys found that Uncle Isaac had his potatoes so nearly dug, that, with their help, he finished them in a day, thus completing his harvest. He now had leisure to haul the widow's wood.

The next day the boys went over and dug her potatoes, and threshed some beans and peas, which she had pulled and dried herself. In the mean time Uncle Isaac, and two more of the neighbors, went

Hosted by Google

and chopped some wood, and the next day hauled it to her. The tears of gratitude and joy streamed down the old lady's cheeks at the kindness of her neighbors. The only remaining work to be done, was to take the fish, which were in Captain Rhines's shed, nicely cured, to Mrs. Yelf. The boys felt bashful about carrying them, and wanted Uncle Isaac to do it.

"I should like to catch myself doing it! you caught and cured them, and run some risk in doing it, and ought to, and shall have, the credit of it."

"We will haul them over, and carry them into the house," said John, "and do all the work, but you go to the door and give them to her."

"And let her thank me for them? I shan't do any such thing; you must go yourselves, like men; it's nothing to be ashamed of, but something to be proud of; anybody would think you'd been stealing."

Unable to prevail with Uncle Isaac, they put the fish in the cart, and set out. When in sight of the house they stopped for consultation.

"You go to the door and knock, Fred," said John.

"I'm sure I can't; I never spoke to her in my life. It's your place to go; it's your cart and oxen."

Hosted by Google

"You go, Charlie, that's a good fellow."

"O, I don't think I'm the one to go at all, John. I'm a stranger in these parts, and don't know her, nor the ways of the people here."

John, ordinarily so resolute, and the leader in all enterprises, blushed like a girl, and seemed quite frightened.

"What shall I say?" he inquired of his companions, who were by no means backward in telling him what to say, as long as they had not to say it themselves.

"You get out! you make it too long; I can't say half of that."

John went to the door and knocked, while the others hid behind the cart. The old lady knew John right well; he had been there on many an errand of mercy, sent by his mother.

"Fred Williams, Charlie Bell, and me, he stammered out, have brought you some dry fish; we expect they are first rate, because Uncle Isaac slack-salted them, and told us how to cure them."

Now, Mrs. Yelf was very deaf, and as John, being diffident, spoke low and quick, she heard nothing distinctly but the name of Uncle Isaac, and took it for granted that he had given her the fish. After showing the boys where to put them, she

Hosted by Google

expressed her most unbounded gratitude to Uncle Isaac, begging the boys to thank him for her; thanked them for bringing them, and would not let them go till they had eaten a custard pie and some seed cakes.

"I should know Mr. Williams's son, for I can see his father's looks in him; but this other youngster quite beats me. Dear me, how young folks do grow out of old people's knowledge!"

"This," said John, "is Charlie Bell; he's an English boy, and lives with our Ben on Elm Island."

"I remember now hearing Hannah Murch tell about him; she said he was a nice, steady boy, and that Ben and Sally set great store by him. He looks like a good boy."

"He's a real smart boy, too," said John (giving Fred a punch under the table); "he catches all the fish they eat, and a good many to sell, and has made lots of baskets, and sent them to the West Indies by father."

"Yes," broke in Fred (who was by no means slow to take a hint), "and cut down an awful great pine, and made the canoe that we came over in, out of it."

Under this cross-fire Charlie's face grew red as a

Hosted by Google

fire-coal, and he was glad to escape from his tormentors by leaving the house.

When Uncle Isaac found what turn matters had taken, he was thoroughly vexed, and went directly to explain, and set the affair right. The good lady was no less troubled to find what a blunder she had made, and set off for Captain Rhines's, to thank John in person, and ask him to apologize for her to the others.

John and Fred went home, but Uncle Isaac insisted upon Charlie's staying with him all night. After supper he produced Charlie's broad-axe, with a good white-oak handle, and nicely ground; he also gave him an excellent whetstone, which he told him came from the Gut of Canso. Charlie had now a favorable opportunity to consult him about a matter that had occupied his thoughts from the moment he found himself in possession of a little money.

"Uncle Isaac," said he, "mother hasn't got any crane; all the way she hangs her pot over the fire is by a birch withe, with a chain at the end; and sometimes it burns off above the chain: the other day it broke, and liked to have scalded the baby to death. I want to get her a crane, — hooks and trammels all complete, — and put it in the fireplace before she knows anything of it."

Hosted by Google

"The first thing to be considered is, whether you ought to spend your money in this way; if you spend all you earn, you will never have anything."

"Don't think that I don't know the value of money, — misery has taught me that; but what would have become of me if mother had not taken me in? for it was all her doings. When the island is paid for, I shall begin to look out for myself. Will anybody have to send to Boston to get one?"

"Send to Boston! Peter Brock, the blacksmith, can make it."

"And what will it all cost — hooks and trammels?"

Charlie was delighted to find that it came within his means. He said nothing to Uncle Isaac of the Indian relics, meaning to show them to him when he came on the island, but told him about the paint.

"The Indians used to get it there," said Uncle Isaac, "to paint their faces red, when they went on the war-path."

"It isn't red — it's yellow."

"But if you heat it, it will become red."

"It will?"

"Yes. Put a little in a skillet, and heat it gradually, so as not to scorch it, and it will turn red."

Hosted by Google

"How glad I am! now I can have *two* colors — red and yellow — to paint my canoe. Don't tell John — will you? I want to astonish him."

"He won't ask me; he isn't such an inquiring, thinking, contriving critter as you are. You can have another color — black."

"Yes; if I could send to Salem and buy lamp-black."

"You can make it right on the island."

"Make it?"

"Yes; it's nothing but 'sut.' Get a whole lot of pitch wood, and burn it in some tight thing, so as to keep in the smoke; the black will stick to the sides, and you can scrape it off, as good lamp-black as you can buy, and better than half of it."

"We have got plenty of oil, — hake, cod, and seal."

"I wouldn't use *that;* it is almost impossible to make it dry; you can get linseed oil at the store."

Wonderfully delighted with this discovery, Charlie borrowed a jug, procured his oil, some cloth to make a sail for his canoe, and went back determined to create a sensation both at home and abroad. He hid the oil in his house, and kept all the knowledge he had obtained a secret in his own breast.

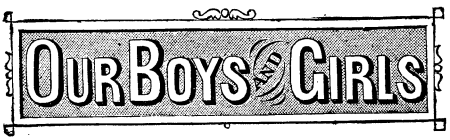
Hosted by Google

How he astonished John and Fred, when he appeared out in his canoe, — how he was astonished himself by obtaining, in a most unexpected manner, three more colors, with many more adventures, we shall inform our readers in the next volume. They will also want to know how it fared with Captain Rhines and the Ark; and whether Ben was benefited or ruined by his great speculation; and how Charlie came out with his baskets, turnips, and chickens.

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

OLIVER OPTIC'S MAGAZINE,



The only Original American Juvenile Magazine published once a Week.

EDITED BY OLIVER OPTIC,

Who writes for no other juvenile publication — who contributes each year

Four Serial Stories,

The cost of which in book form would be $5.00 — *double the subscription price of the Magazine!*

Each number (published every Saturday) handsomely illustrated by THOMAS NAST, and other talented artists.

Among the regular contributors, besides OLIVER OPTIC, are

SOPHIE MAY, author of "Little Prudy and Dotty Dimple Stories."
ROSA ABBOTT, author of "Jack of all Trades," &c.
MAY MANNERING, author of "The Helping-Hand Series," &c.
WIRT SIKES, author of "On the Prairies," &c.
OLIVE LOGAN, author of "Near Views of Royalty," &c.
REV. ELIJAH KELLOGG, author of "Good Old Times," &c.

Each number contains 16 pages of Original Stories, Poetry, Articles of History, Biography, Natural History, Dialogues, Recitations, Facts and Figures, Puzzles, Rebuses, &c.

OLIVER OPTIC'S MAGAZINE contains more reading matter than any other juvenile publication, and is the *Cheapest and the Best* Periodical of the kind in the United States.

TERMS, IN ADVANCE.

Single Subscriptions, one year, $2.50	Three copies, ... $6.50
One Volume, Six Months, . . . 1.25	Five copies, ... 10.00
Single Copies, ... 6 cts.	Ten copies (an extra copy *free*), 20.00

Canvassers and local agents wanted in every State and town, and liberal arrangements will be made with those who apply to the Publishers.

A handsome cloth cover, with a beautiful gilt design, will be furnished for binding the numbers for the year for 50 cts. All the numbers for 1867 will be supplied for $2.25. Bound volumes, $3.50.

Any boy or girl who will write to the Publishers shall receive a specimen copy by mail free.

LEE & SHEPARD, Publishers,

149 Washington Street, Boston.

Hosted by Google

THE ARMY AND NAVY STORIES.

In Six Volumes.

A Library for Young and Old.

BY OLIVER OPTIC.

I.

THE SOLDIER BOY;

Or, Tom Somers in the Army.

II.

THE SAILOR BOY;

Or, Jack Somers in the Navy.

III.

THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT;

Or, The Adventures of an Army Officer.

A SEQUEL TO "THE SOLDIER BOY."

IV.

THE YANKEE MIDDY;

Or, The Adventures of a Naval Officer.

A SEQUEL TO "THE SAILOR BOY."

V.

FIGHTING JOE;

Or, The Fortunes of a Staff Officer.

A SEQUEL TO "THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT."

VI.

BRAVE OLD SALT;

Or, Life on the Quarter Deck.

A SEQUEL TO "THE YANKEE MIDDY."

Hosted by Google

LIBRARY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY OLIVER OPTIC.

I.

THE BOAT CLUB;

OR, THE BUNKERS OF RIPPLETON.

II.

ALL ABOARD;

OR, LIFE ON THE LAKE.

III.

LITTLE BY LITTLE;

OR, THE CRUISE OF THE FLYAWAY.

IV.

TRY AGAIN;

OR, THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF HARRY WEST.

V.

NOW OR NEVER;

OR, THE ADVENTURES OF BOBBY BRIGHT.

VI.

POOR AND PROUD;

OR, THE FORTUNES OF KATY REDBURN.

Six volumes, put up in a neat box.

LEE & SHEPARD, Publishers.

Hosted by Google

WOODVILLE STORIES.

BY OLIVER OPTIC.

I.

RICH AND HUMBLE;

Or, The Mission of Bertha Grant.

II.

IN SCHOOL AND OUT;

Or, The Conquest of Richard Grant.

III.

WATCH AND WAIT;

Or, The Young Fugitives.

IV.

WORK AND WIN;

Or, Noddy Newman on a Cruise.

V.

HOPE AND HAVE;

Or. Fanny Grant among the Indians.

VI.

HASTE AND WASTE;

Or, The Young Pilot of Lake Champlain.

LEE & SHEPARD, Publishers.

Hosted by Google

RIVERDALE STORY BOOKS.

BY OLIVER OPTIC.

12 vols., in neat box.

I.
THE LITTLE MERCHANT.

II.
THE YOUNG VOYAGERS.

III.
THE CHRISTMAS GIFT.

IV.
DOLLY AND I.

V.
UNCLE BEN.

VI.
BIRTH-DAY PARTY.

VII.
PROUD AND LAZY.

VIII.
CARELESS KATE.

IX.
ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.

X.
THE PICNIC PARTY.

XI.
THE GOLD THIMBLE.

XII.
THE DO-SOMETHINGS.

LEE & SHEPARD, . . . Publishers.

Hosted by Google

Sophie May's Popular Series.

LITTLE PRUDY STORIES.

Six Volumes.

ILLUSTRATED.

COMPRISING:

Little Prudy. Little Prudy's Cousin Grace.
Little Prudy's Sister Susie. Little Prudy's Story Book.
Little Prudy's Capt. Horace. Little Prudy's Dotty Dimple.

Price per Volume, 75 cents.

Read the high commendation of the *North American Review*, which places this series at the

Head of Juvenile Literature.

"Genius comes in with 'Little Prudy.' Compared with her, all other book-children are cold creations of Literature only; she alone is the real thing. All the quaintness of childhood, its originality, its tenderness and its teasing, — its infinite, unconscious drollery, the serious earnestness of its fun, the fun of its seriousness, the natural religion of its plays, and the delicious oddity of its prayers, — all these waited for dear Little Prudy to embody them. Sam Weller is not more piquant; Hans Andersen's nut-crackers and knitting-needles are not more thoroughly charged with life. Who is our benefactress in the authorship of these books the world knows not. Sophie May must doubtless be a fancy name, by reason of the spelling, and we have only to be grateful that the author did not inflict on us the customary alliteration in her pseudonyme. The rare gift of delineating childhood is hers, and may the line of 'Little Prudy' go out to the end of the earth..... To those oversaturated with transatlantic traditions, we recommend a course of 'Little Prudy.'"

Copies of any of the above books sent by mail on receipt of price.

LEE AND SHEPARD,

PUBLISHERS,

149 Washington Street, Boston.

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google